# ISLAMIC ISSUES IN THE WEST

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*In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

## (1)

## HUMAN FRATERNITY

In August 1992, I received an invitation from some Muslim communities in North America to give lectures and practice *da'wah* (inviting people to Islam) over there. I accepted their invitation thinking that I was going to that new land to find people whose eyes had become wide open on new horizons, whose senses and minds had expanded to realize the recent developments of life and civilization.

But the surprise was shocking and its impact upon my soul, the truth and reality, were alarming and painful, particularly as for the Egyptian Muslims who had been living there for several years and had become familiar with the American life.

Also, the media and men of letters surprised me by their misconception of Islam and its history. As for the common American people, they have a totally distinct attitude unlike that of those mentioned above.

Out of all this, I comprehended that I was faced with three fields to work in: first, the immigrant Muslims, most of whom are Egyptian along with other nationalities; second, the common American; third, the media.

I will discuss the first and second fields later on. But as for the third, one of my tours included the following incident. In Brooklyn, a press conference was held on Friday, 8 January 1993 in a special meeting hall on Flat Bush Avenue. Among the attendants were Fathi Hijazi, editing consultant of *Sawt As-Salam* (*Voice of Peace*) newspaper, and Professor Muhammad Mahdi, the Islamic conference general secretary who translated my conversation with Reuters's representative.

The conference topic was Islam and Muslims and their relationship with other religions and non-Muslims. I drew their attention to the fact that the American media lack correct information about Islam. One must resort to the authentic Islamic sources and specialists and not to temporary incidents and the conduct of some irreligious Muslims, for this brings about distortions and misconceptions about Islam and mars the clear-cut truth. Hence, they must go directly to scholars and the original

Islamic sources, i.e., the Qur'an and Prophetic Sunnah, and to the history of Islam.

On the strength of all this I continued. The Qur'an, the first book of Islam, states two general principles that constitute the basis of foreign affairs in Islam. Out of these spring Muslims' conduct and the ties between the Muslim *Ummah* (nation) and others. We will recognize them as two human principles that render Islam universal and human rather than national and racial.

The first principle is that all human beings, as stated in the Qur'an, go back to one father and one mother. Allah the Almighty says:

> ❴*O mankind! Fear Allah the One Who fashioned you from a single person, and of the same kind He created his wife, and from the pair of them scattered many men and women.*❵
>
> (An-Nisa', 1)

He also says:

> ❴*O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Surely the most honourable of you*

*in the sight of Allah is the most pious of you. Indeed Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.*❳

(Al-Hujurat, 13)

Thus Islam establishes a conclusive human principle: universal human fraternity. According to Islam, all human beings are related by a single origin, one father and one mother, and the goal of racial and tribal diversity is for them to get mutually acquainted. This means exchanging utilites and experiences, knowledge and thought. It is a diversity that leads to integration, not distintegration.

The second principle is that diversity among human beings is something natural that cannot be altered or changed by humans, for Allah says in the Qur'an:

❲*And if your Lord had pleased He would surely have made the people one nation, but they continue in their differences; except those on whom your Lord has Mercy. And for this He created them*❳

(Hud, 118-19)

Based on these two principles, Islam has defined the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims whatever their belief, religion, color, nationality or any other type of diversity taken by some people to be a ground for disunity and warring as seen in racial, religious, or ethnic

discriminations witnessed between whites and blacks and in Palestine, Kashmir, Bosnia. All these represent--from an Islamic perspective—a civilizational, human setback! In contrast, Islam establishes these relationships on the bases of justice, beneficence, and benevolence. Thus, a true Muslim should practice absolute justice, even with a non-Muslim, and treat him well.

This is stated in the Qur'an in several places, as in:

> ❨*O you who believe! Be constant for Allah as just witnesses, and do not let detestation of a people move you to be unfair, be equitable, that is closer to piety, and fear Allah, Allah is well aware of all that you do.*❩
> (Al-Ma'idah, 8)

and in

> ❨*Allah forbids you not with regard to those who have not fought you in the cause of Religion, nor expelled you from your homes, that you should be considerate and deal justly with them, surely Allah loves the just. Indeed! Allah forbids you only with regards to those who have fought you in the cause of Religion, and expelled you from your homes, and have helped in expelling you, that you should take them for friends.*

*And whoever takes them for friends, those, they are the evildoers*❯

(Al-Mumtahanah, 8-9)

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked what the best deeds in Islam are, he replied, "Feeding others and declaring peace to whomever you happen to meet, whether you know him or not" (Al-Bukhari, Book of Faith). Declaring peace means greeting others by saying "Peace be upon you." That peace, which is the most needed and desired goal of human beings at the present time, is one of the decrees of Islam established since its very beginning. Moreover, Islam urges its spread to all humans, those you know and those you do not know. Ammar, one of the earliest Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "The one who enjoys these three things perfectly is a true believer: being just to others, granting peace to the whole world, and spending even when you are in need" (Book on Faith).

Also, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) rose to his feet when seeing a funeral passing by him. When told the dead was a Jew, he declared his wonderful human words: "Is it not a human soul?" (Al-Bukhari).

Can you ever find such human values and their practical application in anything other than the religion of Islam? The Islamic principles are not merely abstract theoretical models, nor are they mental statements that find room only in minds. Rather, they are practical ones that can be applied, as witnessed by the world.

Humanity witnessed ideal theories such as Plato's republic and Al-Farabi's utopia. Then, it has been made clear to the whole world that these are nothing but ideals that can never be realized in factual life. As for the principles of Islam, they have been applied by Muslims and recorded for more than thirteen hundred years. In addition, many non-Muslim scholars have borne witness to that. Foremost among them was the French philosopher Gustave Le Bon, who said, "History has never seen a conqueror more just and merciful than the Muslim Arabs."

Also, the history of Crusades, as called by their Western initiators, is an ideal witness of the greatness of Islamic values and their realization and application by Muslims upon non-Muslims.

I asked the Reuters correspondent: Is it justice or rational that when some Muslims do not abide—partially or totally—by

the basic Islamic principles, to consider this against Islam itself? The French Revolution was launched to realize the principles of fraternity, freedom, and equality, and the first persons who acted in a way contrary to these principles were the French themselves, Napoleon in particular. So, can these principles be blamed for the desertion made by humans? Also, America claims it is based on liberalism. Does it practice this principle in its dealings with weak nations? Does it practice what it advocates—calling it international legality or the New World Order—with justice and equality? Does its stand on Bosnia agree with what it advocates? The same can be said about its double standards on the issues of Palestine, Kashmir, Burma, etc.

Certainly, you need first to understand Islam in an unbiased way, then we may sit together at the table of fraternity for supporting rights.

By this the meeting came to an end and the agency's photographer concluded, "Through this meeting I learned about Islam what I have never known for thirty years." Finally, I thanked him very much.

## (2)

## WESTERNERS DO NOT UNDERSTAND ISLAM

During frequent interviews with correspondents in New York and some TV stations, I told them our dialogue revolves around three basic points.

First, Islam is misunderstood by most Westerners and unjustly treated by those who rightly understand it, save some few sincere people. Because of this misunderstanding and injustice, they judge Islam wrongfully simply because the premises are invalid.

If those people go back to the words of the sincere and competent Western scholars, they will find fair statements and unbiased testimonies. Moreover, they themselves will admit the greatness of Islam and its system.

Among those fair scholars were the Polish sociologist Zejierki, who embraced Islam and changed his name to Isma'il, and Roafe, the Briton who studied the known religions thoroughly and finally adopted Islam and called himself Ra'uf.

In *The History of Western Philosophy* (London, 1948), the historian-philosopher Bertrand Russell says that we call the period between the years 699 and 1000 A.D. the Dark Ages, and this proves our wrongful limitation of interest to Western Europe, as the Islamic civilization was then flourishing from India to Spain. What was lacked by Christendom then was not lacked by humanity in general.

Also, Roafe says, "I studied the Islamic civilization at a British university and I realized, for sure, that that is what saved Europe from the Dark Ages and that many modern sciences are rightfully traced back to Islam (and its scholars)."

It was a strange accident that I stated that fact in some of my lectures in Brooklyn, New York, and on the next day a former American president commented in an article on President Clinton's intention to increase taxes. He said that while he had been president, he had adopted the views of the

Arab scholar Ibn Khaldun, who said that at the very beginning of establishing an empire, the tax rate is low, while revenues are high, and in its declining stage, the tax rate increases, while the revenue decreases. (*New York Times*, 18 February, 1993)

As for the second point, it can be summed up in the following question: What is the philosophy upon which Islam relies in establishing human society?

Forgive me for using the word "philosophy", as it is a human word that does not fit a divine religion like Islam. But I mean it to demonstrate the structural organization of Islam in establishing the world community. Here I will try to summarize this organization in a few points.

**A.** Islam is the religion of universal peace, as it calls its followers to adhere to this general type of peace:[1]

> ❮*O you who believe! Enter perfectly in Islam and follow not the footsteps of Satan. Verily! He is to you a plain enemy.*❯
>
> (Al-Baqarah, 208)

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[1]In the Qur'an the word is *silm*, here translated as "Islam". Both words have the root meaning of "peace". (editor)

It also tells its followers:

❬*...and say not to anyone who greets you (by embracing Islam): "You are not a believer", seeking the perishable goods of the worldly life.*❭

(An-Nisa', 94)

Also, it makes its return greeting, "Peace, blessing, and mercy of Allah upon you!" The name of this religion is *Islam*, from the same Arabic root as *salam* (peace). The Qur'an states that the greeting bestowed by Allah on the believers in Paradise is "peace":

❬*On the Day they shall meet Him their greeting will be "Peace"...*❭

(Al-Ahzab, 44)

It also states that the angels' greeting to them is "peace":

❬*... and the angels will enter to them from every gate - "Peace upon you... "*❭

(Ar-R'ad, 23-24)

It also calls Paradise "the abode of peace":

❬*Allah invites to the abode of peace...*❭

(Yunus, 25)

Thus, the idea of peace in Islam is an inherent one that extends its light from its being used as the greeting in the

present life and also in the Hereafter. It considers peace to be one of the finest attributes of Allah, Who is believed by Muslims to be Lord of All the Worlds.

**B.** On this basis, Islam forbids aggressive wars, as it says in the Qur'an:

> ❬*... and do not transgress, surely Allah does not love the transgressors.*❭
>
> (Al-Baqarah, 190)

It restricts war to only three reasons. First is a defensive war against those who transgress.

> ❬*... if anyone commits aggression against you, then commit aggression against him to the like of his aggression...*❭
>
> (Al-Baqarah, 194)

Second is a preventive war against those whose planning against Muslims is confirmed.

> ❬*If you fear treachery from any people throw back (their covenant) to them (so as to be) on equal terms (that there will be no more covenant between you and them).*❭
>
> (Al-Anfal, 58)

Third is a war of liberation against those tyrant people who subject the weak, transgress against people, deprive them of the freedom to listen to the call of Islam, and force them to adopt disbelief. Allah the Almighty says:

> ﴾*And how can you not fight in the cause of Allah and to save those men, women and children who have been oppressed and who pray, "Our Lord deliver us from this land whose people are oppressors, and make for us from You a protector, and make for us from You a helper."*﴿
>
> (An-Nisa', 75)

Islam, with such well-defined methodology, subjects the political war to ethics and morals. This is something totally new to the world since the dawn of Islam. It is still thus to the world's politics that strive to capture the wealth and resources of other nations. Accusing Islam of terrorism and claiming that it is a terrorist religion is a false notion, biased allegation, and contradictory description. And facts not do admit contradiction.

**C.** Islam is a creed based on monotheism and equality of humans before Allah the Almighty. No one ever has a special status before Allah except due to belief and good deeds. This

is a just scale that is available to all humans of every race and color.

**D.** Islam is an integrated way of life that has its own laws covering politics, foreign and internal affairs. Islam has its own system concerning wealth and economy, and values and manners. It has a special system for family that pays specific and much attention to women and children. It is a pioneering system in all respects. The woman in England, for example, one of the most democratic in Western Europe, was given the right of possession only in 1912.

My third major point is: What do the unbiased ones dislike of Islam's system? And can those who dislike it bring something better for humanity, or even the like? Or it may be that the reason behind this enmity for Islam stems from recognizing its values and universal system!

How can we interpret all these international campaigns against Islam and Muslims? How can the world conscience—if there is any—approve these ethical tragedies?

For sure, these will be stigmas in the history of the West in general and America in particular, so do you accept this? Can you give a fair account for unbalancing the scale of Western

dealing with Muslims but not with others? Upon this, we ask you: where is your claim of freedom?

Why do you blame the violent reactions while overlooking the motives behind them? Is this another ring of the chain of racial discrimination and injustice?

## (3)

## ISLAM IS WRONGED

## BY WESTERNERS

Though the bombing of the World Trade Center in Manhattan, New York was unsuccessful [in achieving the aims of its perpetrators], it helped show the hidden enmity, hatred, and deep-rooted grudge against Islam and Muslims in the West in general and America in particular. This unsuccessful bombing was seen as exploding all this unfair hatred in their breasts.

Some people said that the Israeli Musad was behind it. But as soon as the accident took place, all the media—with the influence and might to formulate the American public opinion—started describing Islam as "terrorism" and Muslims as "terrorists". Moreover, they began to raise finished issues concerning which the court had said its word, such as the killing of Rabbi Kahana. The Egyptian-American Sayed Nusair had been accused of the crime. The court had

declared him not guilty but had imprisoned him for twenty-two years for other changes. This led to his being brought before the court while imprisoned, and he was sentenced to spend four years in solitary confinement.

The media also started to raise suspended issues like that of Sheikh Umar Abdur-Rahman, his getting into America, his stay, and whether he had any relation to the bombing. He was brought to court charged with illegal entry to America and telling lies to get the visa. The court released him, but the case was opened again. The media put pressure on him, asking him about murdering Mustafa Shalabi, the Mujahid who had run the Jihad's office for the Afghani Mujahids. Sheikh `Umar denied knowing him, while they had no doubt that he had known him. The matter made him say, later on, "I meet many people, and hence, I remember some of them and forget others." What made a bad impression upon me was that he lied in his appeal for political asylum and in his attempt to get a visa to America, and that was broadcast by the world radio. These are their claims.

Back to my first point. The media exaggerated the matter while ignoring the rumors launched around Musad. It directed the international attention towards Islam and Muslims, aided in this by the arrest of the Palestinian

Muhammad Salamah, a resident of New Jersey and one of the Muslims who used to perform prayers in this state's, As-Salam Mosque. This led to an attack on the mosque at the hands of New Jersey Jews during an organized march. Consequently, all the mosques in that state and others were afraid of such acts of aggression, till the New York mayor declared that this would not happen again.

As a reaction, American Muslims, especially African-American, gathered around As-Salam Mosque and started to shout at the press and the media, accusing them of altering truths: "The media don't speak the truth." And, in a wonderful melody, they declared their clinging to Islam saying, "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

Amidst all these events and developments, the head of the board of directors of Abu Bakr As-Siddiq Mosque in Brooklyn was arrested. The mosque was the main center for my activities in the field of Islamic *da`wah*. Hence, correspondents showered me with questions, unable to conceal the hint of accusation that lay behind them. They usually asked about issues other than those concerning the bombing, such as my own opinion of Sheik `Umar Abdur-Rahman, President Mubarak, Egypt, and even America itself.

The Japanese TV had its share of these interviews. They asked me questions mostly revolving around Islam and its alleged relationship to terrorism. About the average Muslim, is he instinctively a terrorist? It was an opportunity for them to uncover their deep-rooted grudge against Islam and the Islamic awakening. To tell the truth, some of them were neutral and sought only the truth. But most of what was written was just to heap doubts and charges on Islam and Muslims, starting with terrorism and ending with fundamentalism, accusing us of their own maladies and defects.

Fundamentalism is the name of a religious Protestant movement that appeared in the United States simultaneously with World War I. At that time, a series of booklets and pamphlets were issued under the title *Fundamentals: Proof of Truth* expounding their principles and dogmas: to have complete faith in the Gospels as a realistic and historical record, and a historic prophecy that rejects all sorts of debate concerning its validity in topics such as ethics, creed, and historical events; hence, to accept all its concepts and have faith in it as a confirmed fact without any interpretation. Here, we are not interested in stating the differences between that kind of fundamentalism and its proponents on the one hand, and the Islamic awakening and advocating Islam as a

comprehensive way of life on the other hand. What concerns us here is these constant attempts to attribute all woeful and ugly qualities of Islam before Westerners, particularly Americans.

Hence, my answers concentrated on the essence of the topic apart from the attempts at side issues. My answers can be summarized in the following points, under the title "A Statement for the People".

**1.** You know the current events: an explosion, dead and injured people. You know the consequences: protests, detentions, accusations, demonstrations, attacks on As-Salam Mosque—and many other mosques may be attacked as well—, frightening Muslims, expanding accusations from the individual to the community and from the person to thought and religion.

**2.** Islam rejects accusations based on suspicion, while our actual reality in these events produced accusations based on suspicion! Islam deems man as originally innocent, so it does not ask for a proof of innocence. Islam does not accuse anyone without presenting any evidence. Islam establishes this relation of human fraternity between Muslims and non-Muslims regardless of differences of religion, color, territory,

or language. Why is this unique Islamic principle then forgotten, and why is it that Islam and Muslims are ascribed with things of which they are perfectly free? Islam enjoins absolute justice and benevolence, but are Muslims treated just as their religion advocates? Islam declares that the mainstay of life is safety and security. Why is it, then, that Muslims are terrified and frightened? The religion of Islam says, "Produce your proof." Proof to Muslims is both reason and faith. Proof is tangible, just as the sun and the day. It is above the evidence that may be speculative. It is also above the inferences made on surrounding circumstances. No proof, no evidence, no inference can justify the accusations made by the media. So, by what religion, mind, or law can charges be made and circulated?

**3.** We do ask others to show respect for religions, to care for feelings, to deal in a brotherly way, to judge with justice, to practice equality without any sort of discrimination, and finally, to co-exist without any prejudice or differentiation!

**4.** O Muslims! Injured people gather in times of misery and trouble. This is your day to prove your presence, defend your religion, and clear away suspicions surrounding you. This is your day to be on the way most loved by Allah the Almighty, like a tight structure. So, let's be one rank, one unified heart,

one objective act, and let's have one unified leadership that lays down plans and carries them out. Let's all be in the service of right, justice, and good, and Allah is the most Helpful One!

## (4)

## ISLAM:

## A UNIVERSAL RELIGION

When I received the invitation from the Arab and Egyptian communities in New York City, I thought that I was going to meet a people whose eyes and minds had been opened wide on a spacious world and an advanced civilization that may help those who know it and live in it realize the facts about Islam and its universal spirit that cannot be realized by anyone who has not traveled outside his small area but has known only a small number of people and ideologies.

I was and still am astonished and sorry that I found something contrary to what I had hoped for. For I found a people whose only matters they knew were some related to one's appearance, some other minor issues, and those related to faith (ideology). I found them comprehending these issues in a specific way that is neither abiding nor conclusive. We will deal with some of them in time. For the time being, I just

want to deal with their understanding of the question of a Muslim's relationship with non-Muslims. It made me very sad to find out that among those behind their inadequate understanding were some persons who share and enjoy qualifications of Islamic knowledge!

Islam is a scholarly, heavenly, and universal message whose universality is stated through the Qur'an when it addresses people, all people, and clarifies the fact that they are partners in what has been created by Allah the Almighty for them:

> ❬*O you people! Eat of what is lawful and good on the earth, and do not follow Satan's footsteps, surely he is an abject enemy to you.*❭
>
> (Al-Baqarah, 168)

> ❬*Allah is the One Who created for you all that is the earth, then likewise He fashioned seven heavens in harmony. And He is All-Knowing of all things.*❭
>
> (Al-Baqarah, 29)

Also, Islam's universality has been confirmed through the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): "The prophet (of old) was sent to his people specifically, while I was sent to all people" (Al-Bukhari and Muslim). He was sent thus to

show mercy to them all, as stated by Allah the Almighty in His Qur'an:

﴾*And We did not send you but as a mercy to all beings.*﴿

(Al-Anbiya', 107)

Moreover, the universality of Islam has been confirmed through his action (peace be upon him), as he sent messages addressing kings and leaders, calling them to Islam and notifying them that they would shoulder the responsibility for their subjects not converting to Islam if they themselves did not.

In addition, Islam's universality has been stated through the behavior of the Prophet's Companions when they traveled throughout the land following his death, bearing signs of guidance and light to set the people free from rulers' tyranny, and ridding people of worshiping others to worship only Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

This universality characterizing the religion of Islam requires its doctrines and legislation to encompass all people with their diversity in natures, customs, conventions, and inclinations.

The universality of Islam also requires that there not be anything that may confine a Muslim to himself, or to his race, or his brothers in faith, and cut him off from others.

Also, this universality requires Islam to evaluate a Muslim's relationship to others on a human basis that may harmonize and draw nearer, not scare away, excite thought, and awaken feeling. All this has been fulfilled.

It suffices here what we mentioned earlier: the Qur'an returns all humans to two parents in a way that makes distant relationship a near one, renders fruits of acquaintance, harmony, and integration, and that keeps away from fanaticism and alienation. Rather, it constitutes a gathering point for all humanity to meet in a way to render relationships stronger and become acquainted and harmonized. Allah the Almighty says:

> ❬*O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes, that you may know one another.*❭
>
> (Al-Hujurat, 13)

Also, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to invoke Allah the Almighty immediately after every prayer saying, "O Allah, our Lord and the Lord of everything! I bear witness

that You are the Lord, alone with no partner. O Allah, our Lord and the Lord of everything! I bear witness that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is Your servant and Messenger. O Allah, our Lord and the Lord of everything, I bear witness that all humans are brothers" (Abu Dawud). The word "slaves" can be used to refer to both the believers and non-believers, as in the Qur'an:

❬*And Allah is All-Seer of the (His) slaves.*❭

(Al-`Imran, 15)

❬*And He is the Irresistible, above His slaves*❭

(Al-An`am, 18)

In respect of the practical method, Islam made righteousness, justice, and benevolence the basis for the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. The Qur'an says:

❬*Most surely Allah enjoins justice, the doing of good deeds and generosity to near of kin, and He forbids indecency, abomination and tyranny.*❭

(An-Nahl, 90)

It also says:

❬*Allah forbids you not with regard to those who have not fought you in the cause of Religion, nor expelled*

*you from your homes, that you should be considerate and deal justly with them, surely Allah loves the just.*❫
(Al-Mumtahanah, 8)

On this noble Islamic methodology—of which humans, thoughts, behaviors, ideologies, and policies fell short—the Muslim State expanded. Many nations, both civilized and Bedouin, embraced Islam. Muslims never were annoyed with these recent converts, though there were great differences in their thoughts, customs, traditions, and costumes.

The variety in these nations' customs was significant, just as the distance spanned by the places where they lived. Hence, it become a spacious world in which conventions diverted, and where the Muslim countries represented the human world in its diversity of thoughts, differences in customs, and variety of cultures. Upon that, earlier Muslims found nothing wrong in taking part, sometimes, in the celebrations and feasts of these nations. Muslims celebrated with Persians the New Years' Day (Nairuz), and Muslim poets composed poems in its praise. They also composed poems in praise of so many things respected by Persians. They shared the festivals held in Egypt by the Copts celebrating the Nile River and its loyalty. Muslims also wore the garments of the Romans and mentioned them in their proverbs and poetry. Muslims dealt with dirhams and dinars that were not coined

in Muslim countries. These coins sometimes had the picture of their kings and princes, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) dealt with them. The Prophet wore clothes that were made in other than Muslim countries, and Muslims inhabited houses built by non-Muslim Copts and Byzantines. Muslims took the administrative and military systems from these countries and translated their sciences, knowledge, and philosophy. Caliph Al-Ma'mun established the House of Wisdom College and appointed a non-Muslim as its manager. Also, `Amr bin Al-`As kept the Copts in their posts and restored dignity to their high priest who had been extremely humiliated at the hands of the Christian Byzantines.

With this practical Islamic spirit, Muslims achieved the universality of Islam as it had been realized and achieved before in their religious texts.

Muslims did all this on one condition: that nothing should conflict with any of the doctrines of Islam. And thus, Muslims have preserved and kept their unique and distinguished Islamic creed, *shari`ah* (law), and character untouched.

In Islam, it is not permissible for anyone to glorify an inherited custom just because it is inherited, nor to reject something new because it is new, nor to fear anything because it is non-Muslim. But a Muslim avoids being absorbed by non-Muslims or he may lose his own unique and distinguished character. In so doing, Muslims follow the guidance of their Prophet (peace be upon him) who said to them all, "Seek knowledge even if it is in China, for seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim." (Narrated by Al-`Aqili, Ibn `Adiy, Al-Baihaqi, and Ibn `Abdul-Barr on the authority of Anas).

**5.** This order clarifies the true picture of the universality of Islam. It shows that Muslims are open to the whole world with a practical methodology and ideology that are capable of opening hearts wide, moving emotions, and making minds alert. It is a fact that what attracts non-Muslims towards Islam is not any one part, but rather the harmonious sum of the spiritual teachings and the full practical method for life. Islam is a massive and tight structure in which every part strengthens the others and all the parts result in an integrated and complete balance of theory and practice. And this is the advantage of Islam!

**6.** O Muslims living among non-Muslims! Beware!

- What is the religion you present to others while you live in their land, eat their fruits, and take shelter under their laws, then you refrain from greeting them, and, moreover, you allege this is an Islamic manner?

- What is the religion in whose name you give *fatwas* (opinions regarding Islamic law) that tell you it is permissible to betray them while they accepted you as inhabitants of their land?

- What is the religion in whose name you allege that stealing their money and evading paying taxes are lawful? Can any of the enemies of Islam show to others a picture of Islam and Muslims more malicious than this one?

The salutation of Islam is, "Peace be upon you." It has more significance than a more congratulation at feasts or other occasions.

Our Prophet (peace be upon him) asked us to feed others, spread peace among all people, and greet them all, both those we know and those we do not. For Muslims, it does not matter, as spreading peace is the ultimate goal of Islam.

O you Muslims! Observe the teachings of your religion and let them be enforced among you and towards human beings.

Gather yourselves and ask the scholars about matters that you do not know about.

## (5)

## ISLAM:

## A RELIGION OF HUMANITY

**1.** The humanity of Islam and its being a universal religion for all people forever are among the most important Islamic issues which we should care for and elucidate for non-Muslims and for the majority of those who call for an Islamic awakening. Attention to these issues is badly needed in this time in which the influential people raise slogans such as "international legality" and the like, which the oppressed realize are mere slogans to serve the interests of those who raise them.

When I said that we should elucidate these issues for those who call for an Islamic awakening, I said what I intended. If you are told about these people, you will say and mean what I did. And if you visit Arab Muslim immigrants in America, you will realize the importance of these issues and be

overcome by sorrow and grief because of what Muslims do against themselves and their religion!

If you are destined to make this journey, your heart will be distressed by two things that are related to Islam and Muslims.

First, the ideology of most people who are active in the domain of *da`wah* there is restricted to some formal and subsidiary issues and gives little concentration to the great issues. According to their understanding, they make these issues the criterion by which to judge the knowledge and faith of any scholar. So, he is one of two persons: either he agrees with their understanding and saying, or he is in error and ignorant. In such case, he is charged with enormities and innovation of matters of religion. In doing so, they resort to every means, tread every path, recruit every claimer of knowledge and ignoble one. They give no consideration either to manners or to religion. Their grievous disaster, which stands between them and sound understanding, is that they call everyone whose status in religious knowledge and language of Islam is like that of one who is barely literate an imam, and he admonishes and instructs them. The worst thing is that there are many people who are qualified and educated according to this method, and they make these

issues their ultimate aim, their superior example, and their just measure.

Second, those people think that all non-Muslims are enemies in essence. Open war should be waged against them, and their wealth and lands are lawful booty for Muslims. Stealing their properties, betraying them, dodging from taxes are lawful in their right. They also state that the way to harm those people is through Islamic jihad. No wonder that I found, after my return, that some of these people were charged with destruction and their pictures are hung beside those of their leaders!

Thus, with what dangerous disease are those who claim an understanding of Islam afflicted?

Truly, diseases of the human mind are numerous, and the most dangerous of them is narrow-mindedness which depicts the true images of things in a way which is thought as the pinnacle of knowledge. So, if it comes in harmony with existing circumstances, it will be accepted. Otherwise, it is reprehensible and is rejected, even if it is supported by all evidence and admitted by all minds.

**2.** The universality and humanity of Islam is a general issue that has many branches and details. It can be brought into

understanding by the following question: which is the essence of the relation of Muslims with others, peace or war? Here the "others" requires some clarification from its Islamic perspective. That is because the humanity of Muslims is all-embracing to such an extent that it encompasses animals and inanimate objects. Therefore, mercifulness towards animals was made a prescribed duty that may win one Paradise or Hell! Moreover, the direction of the Qur'an and Sunnah concerning male and female slaves is well-known and repeated. Here what is meant by "what the hands own" is everything owned. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to name his camel, sword, and bowl. This is an indication of good ownership. The Qur'an also affirms that every living animal on the earth and every flying being is a form of nation like human nations!

The tendency of humans to gather together is nature *(fitrah)*. The Qur'an describes the Islamic call as nature (*fitrah*). Thus, it is impossible to find something of Islam contradicting the nature *(fitrah)* with which Allah has created all people. For the sake of strengthening the ties of this gathering, the Qur'an states that all mankind belong to one essence and kinship, i.e., the same father and mother. The Qur'an also ascertains the humanity of the prophets and unity

of religion, and describes every messenger as being a brother of his people.

In the preceding question, the word "others" specifically refers to humans, and we ask, which is the essence of the relation of Muslims with others, peace or war? To reach an equitable answer we should ask, did Islam improperly use the sword? Did it draw the sword without need? Did it reject the idea of neutrality?

We find the Qur'an answers in a way that confirms the peaceful relation and rejects the war relation. The Qur'an says: ❬*And fight in Allah's cause those who fight you...*❭. Here the Qur'an not only permits war for self-defense, but stipulates that this should not involve transgression in fighting or fighting those who do not seek war, and this is the pinnacle of justice. The Qur'an says: ❬*and do not transgress*❭ The Qur'an links this conditions to creed to make it firm and to warn people against violating it: ❬*Surely Allah does not love the transgressors*❭. Therefore, Allah detests transgression of limits and orders the Muslims to maintain justice and moderation with those who adopt different religions. This is the culmination of good treatment with opponents.

*❬And fight in Allah's cause those who fight you, and not transgress, surely Allah does not love the transgressors❭*

(Al-Baqarah, 190)

Read and contemplate this verse, then compare it to modern civilization, which transgresses limits and is so excessive that cities, villages, and infrastructures are destroyed, thousands of civilians are killed, and there are other scourges that are characteristic of the wars of the "Age of Progress". Contemplate also this forgery: the decisions of international organizations are made a justification for war, or are scorned, as is done by Western countries in general, particularly Israel, nowadays.

Therefore, it becomes clear that the Qur'an, the constitution of Islam, does not improperly use the sword or use it in the presence of other alternatives. Concerning the neutral people, the Qur'an says:

*❬If they withdraw and desist from fighting you, and offer you peace, then Allah assigns no way to you against them.❭*

(An-Nisa', 90)

Among the wonderful incidents in which this principle is applied is the hadith reported by Jabir: The Messenger of

Allah (peace be upon him) was in a war. A group of the enemy took the Muslims by surprise. Thereupon, one of them came and stood before the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) while he was sleeping and unsheathed his sword saying. "Who could protect you from me?" The Messenger of Allah replied, "Allah." Thereupon, the sword fell from the hand of this man. The Prophet (peace be upon him) picked up the sword and addressed the man, "Who could protect you from me?" The man replied, "Be the best of takers." The Messenger (peace be upon him) said, "Say, I witness that there is no god but Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah." The man replied, "No, but I will never fight you, nor will I be on your side, nor will I be with a people who fight you." Then the Prophet released him. The man went to his people and said, "I came from the best of people."

This precedent is so clear that it needs no explanation or clarification, but the principle of peace with others should not conflict with the principle of non-allegiance with those people. This principle is stressed more than once in the Qur'an in Surahs Al-Ma'idah, Al-Anfal, At-Tawbah, and Al-Mumtahanah. This allegiance, love, and aid are rejected because it is impossible—whether by religion, reason, or knowledge—that relations of love and aid could be founded

on difference of creed and legislation. So, it is unwarrantable for the people of justice to seek the help of polytheists against their attacker, if the rule was Muslim and the word was their word (*Al-Umm*, Ash-Shafi`i, vol. 4, p.138).

Here, there is a confusion of understanding. Some people, when they represent Islam, do not mention anything except its principles of international peace, human fraternity, and what is related to this, and make no mention of its stand on aggression towards Islam and its people and restrictions of its *da`wah.* This understanding presents Islam as surrendering to the enemy and accepting injustice. Some other people reverse the picture and confine themselves to disdain for aversion to aggression and acceptance of injustice, hadiths of the sword, and verses of fighting to such an extent that they make war the essence of relations of Muslims with others. Both these images are distorted, and a piece of the truth is falsehood. The complete picture is what you know: peace and brotherhood unless there is aggression towards the religion, its people, and its *da`wah.*

Unfortunately, the picture of Islam which is represented to most immigrant and American Muslims is the bloody Islam which sees the others through blood and money only because they are others. I wish a discussion would be held with those

who were charged with the explosion to find what they know about international relations of Islam.

**3.** On the basis of this Islamic and human spirit, some Islamic subsidiary judgments and practical applications were founded, which are exemplary for those who seek international peace nowadays by their tongues only but recant it with their knowledge. Among these judgments is that there is no wrong for non-Muslims to learn the Qur'an. There were many Copts of Egypt who attended the lessons of Sheikh Muhammad Abduh in Al-Azhar Mosque. There is also no wrong in *Dhimmis* (Christians or Jews living under Muslims rule) or polytheists sharecropping and trading with Muslims. A gift may be accepted from a polytheist and he may be given one. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to gain the amity of polytheists by supplicating Allah to guide them. He also loved to agree with People of the Book on matters about which he was not commanded, and he said, "There is no blame to narrate from the Banu Isra'il (i.e., the Jews)."

This is the verbal and practical guidance of the Prophet (peace be upon him) which is recorded in ancient books and references of hadith and purified Sunnah. And this is also what is unknown to those with whom I spent some time.

They know nothing but what the Prophet said to `Umar when he saw him holding a page from the Torah: "If Musa bin Imran were still alive, he would surely follow me." They also do not know of the Prophet saying, "There is no blame to narrate from Banu Isra'il." Moreover, they do not know the comment of Hadith scholars that Al-Hafiz wrote in *Al-Fath* (vol.6, p. 388):

> There is no wrong to talk about them. For the Prophet first prohibited to narrate from them or to study their books. Then it was abrogated after that. It is as if the prohibition was prescribed before the establishment of Islamic judgments, for fear of seduction. Then when fear was abolished, the prohibition was abrogated.

According to this restricted understanding, the immigrant Muslims in America live ignorant of the religions of its people. Consequently, they are incapable of propagating Islam, but they even shun this responsibility and are comfortable.

## (6)

## ISLAM

## AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**1.** In its nominal meaning, "development" denotes the act of changing and transferring from one condition to another. The Qur'anic verse ❬*while He has created you in (different) stages*❭ (Nuh,14) means transforming them in the stages of creation, evolving from the drop of seed to the clinging thing until the fetus becomes another creation, a perfect human being.

According to the nominal indication of "development", this changing and transferring must be absolute, as it may go low, high, backward, or forward; it may get closer to or farther from its end; and it may go from a bad condition to a better one, or vice versa, for emotional or behavioral deterioration is an aspect of development, and the evolution through this is development, too.

The word "development" in its own right does not mean progressing or moving forward to the prospective end.

**2.** In its general meaning and according to human historical and scientific fact, "development" is confined to a part of its lexical meaning, namely changing to what is better and more harmonious. Consequently, "development" means progress.

According to this meaning, there must be a prospective goal, and development is the steps progressing towards this goal. Knowing this goal, we set scales by which to weigh this progress and a measure by which we know whether a certain group or nation is developed and advanced, or bound and impervious, and whether it has moved forward or backward.

The range of the goal of human unification is as broad as the range of the development of its society. Accordingly, bringing the family together is the first step. The range of this unification widens still in proportion to the width of man's perceptive capabilities and variations of his culture so much so that mankind has come to call for universal human unification, regardless of the relapses of this call, the derailment of some thinkers or politicians, or the taking of it as a cover. Undoubtedly, the unity of mankind is a supreme value. It is the great goal and the board hope pursued by

human society. It is the measure of the depth of the growth of feelings of a group or nation, and it is the scale in which its trends, and its ideological, social, and political systems can be weighed.

If we look objectively at the history of human societies, we will find that they have generally pursued this great goal, the unity of mankind. Industries, political systems, economies, and humanitarian relations have all pursud this goal, with no difference between the progress in the immaterial thought and conscience and the progress in the material science and application. The globe has become a small village, and the people of the West can hear the low sound in the East.

**3.** Islam admits the true nature of development, both in its nominal meaning and its progressive one. Allah says concerning the comprehensiveness of these two meanings:

> ❬*... surely Allah does not change the condition of a people unless they change what is in themselves*❭
> (Ar-Ra'd, 11)

Concerning development in the meaning of changing into what is lower, He says:

❨*This is because Allah would never change a favour which He has bestowed on a people unless they change what is in their souls.*❩

(Al-Anfal, 53)

and He says:

❨*Then We brought him down to the lowest of the low.*❩

(At-Tin, 5)

Concerning development in the meaning of progressing He says:

❨*... and He will create what you do not know.*❩

(An-Nahl, 8)

❨ *And say: "Praise be to Allah, He will show you His Signs and you will recognize them... "*❩

(An-Naml, 93)

❨*We shall show them Our Signs on the furthest horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth.*❩

(Fussilat, 53)

This means that man will know, with his numerous inventions and great discoveries, that every atom forming the majesty of the cosmos—which will awaken the hidden aspects of nature inside him and take him to certain proofs that have been revealed in the Qur'an—testifes that Allah and Islam are true, and that submission to Allah alone is the gist of religions and the call of the Qur'an. He will realize that everything he has made, invented, and discovered away from this Islam has not brought him happiness, which he has spent his lifetime searching for. On the contrary, it has increased his distress, taking him away from that destination which the cosmos and the Qur'an show the way to. Man will also realize that his happiness and progressive development reside in believing—by words, actions, and conduct—in that which the cosmos indicates and the Qur'an articulates.

> ❬*We shall show them Our Signs on the furthest horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth.*❭
>
> (Fussilat, 53)

This verse includes a guide—developing from the reflection on nature and its signs and the growing understanding of its laws—to the great truth in existence. It is the guide that testifies to Allah the Creator in His creatures, Allah the Maker in His makings, and the unity of creation in its laws

and principles. You see in it the oneness of the unique Creator. You also see what is revealed for mankind, that people must complete their relationship in the form of a connected unit whose weft is the unity of origin and whose warp is the oneness of Allah the Worshiped.

Islam confirms and admits development, yet it does not admit that it is like the links of a chain pulling one another, moving successively. Rather, it admits that development—in both senses—is a reaction between imperviousness and progress, between truth and falsehood, and between the old that is no longer in use and the new that is beneficial. Such a reaction clarifies the truth, uproots the useless, and saves the useful.

> ❴*But We cast the Truth at falsehood, and it triumphs over it and falsehood perishes.*❵
>
> (Al-Anbiya', 18)

> ❴*... then as for the foam it vanishes and that which is good for the people remains on the earth.*❵
>
> (Ar-Ra'd, 17)

So, Islam admits development and regards it as one of Allah's signs, one of His ways set within people and on the

horizons, and one of the means leading to his destiny. It changes according to Allah's will and in conformity with the foregoing: the good for the good and the bad for the bad.

> ❨... *and they should not be as those who were given the Book before, and long ages passed over them, and so their hearts hardened...* ❩
>
> (Al-Hadid, 16)

**4. The meaning of social development**

Man comes into existence alone, controlled in his relation with others by egoism and self-reliance, and with an instinct of loving possessions. Then, his perceptive capabilities grow within the immediate group, his family. He consequently becomes connected to the bond of kinship and lineage. He continues to grow in thought and conscience, the circle of his life experience widens, his tempers moderate, his personal instincts are elevated, his social tendencies grow, and his powers of anger and lust become controlled. Owing to the growth of his perception and feelings and his evolution in knowledge, culture, and social relations, his instincts and powers continue to move towards rectification until he becomes tied to the bond of patriotic fraternity with the

people of his own country, or the bond of nationality with his ethnic group.

But a look at these bonds from outside may show the viewer objectionable bigotry and primitive ignorance, in addition to childish conscience, which cannot be kept hidden by the widening of the bonds' circle from the family up to the members of the ethnic group. However wide it grows, the circle falls into an abyss of a kind of depravity which snatches the humanity of the one who enters it from the essence of his being a human, a descendant of one origin and general nature. This kind of depravity is the denial of the "other", as he denies the other within the family, even if this other is a near kin; and so up to the bond of nationality, which in turn consolidates the culture of bigotry and hatred, denies all the other nations, and amplifies excellence of race, self-admiration, and purity of blood for members of the group as if other human beings were created differently, and so they are the despicable.

At this point, the social development of these people stops. As a result, social and political catastrophes appear. Wars of the modern age (the "Age of Enlightenment") are nothing but a product of the bitter fruits of this fanatic view. This view still exists, although it is covered with meaningless slogans,

such as "New World Order" and "international legitimacy". Such slogans are nothing but an adornment covering the ugliness of the peevish, prideful tendency by whose poisons people are killed, rights denied, nations annihilated, trusts wasted, and values ruined.

Despite the halt of this social development, human beings are looking forward—even with thought and hope—to a new phase of social development and calling—even timidly—for universal and international human fraternity, which learns from the long distress that variation may be the cause of integration, difference may be the determining factor of coalition, and disagreement may be the way to harmony.

Based on this, it follows that social development is a penetrating look to the other, by which one learns that life is based on dualism and that perfect assimilation produces opposites and creates equals that make life impossible.

The human group will continue to develop socially until it reaches the final stage of this development. By then the group will sprout leaves and deliver the best of its fruits, namely human fraternity. Moreover, humanity will become one family sheltered in joint value and one belief, which is

fed by the provision of the Qur'an and guarded by the Islamic spirit of the Muslim.

**5. Islam and social development**

This social development, with its leaves and fruits, is the destiny of human beings to which they are moving by their nature, which is filtered by accidents, calamities, developments of life, advancement of perceptions, and industrial progress. Even the industries of destruction awaken the love for peace and the nature of unification kept hidden in their conscience. Human beings are moving towards that destiny in longing created by nature and culture, and in fear created by the effects of moving away from it, and then with the guidance of Allah found in His Noble Book, the ever-great Qur'an.

This social development—which is kept hidden in the conscience of man, who is naturally civilized and instinctively social, who is moving towards it, by nature, in accordance with development of life, discovery of the laws of the cosmos, and the progress of thought and science—this development, with its final absent stage, is thus not completely unknown. So neither does seeking it and calling for it become impossible, nor is it completely known so that

seeking it becomes vain, it being actually a reality suppressed by overwhelming whims and invaded by deviating thoughts. For such reasons, humanity needs from the Islamic call this great fruit, the farthest end, which is the final end for reformers' hopes and messengers' guidance.

Islam is the religion of nature and science, so its call for human fraternity comes in accordance with nature and science. Then the fruit of social development, despite being the highest stage of development, comes in accordance with the first link in human history: humans were one community of one religion, then they differed. With this sequence, the first and last links in human history conform. Hence, the religion of truth prevails over all religions, the word of the Qur'an comes true, and humanity realizes that it came as a comprehensive religion and community for mankind. There is nothing after that that humanity may ask for. Yet it is not strange that this religion is the last one, the seal, and that human beings do not need a new religion after Islam. What would this new religion do after the religion that releases man's powers, addresses his mind and conscience, and invites him to human fraternity, which is the final stage in his development? So, is there any thing better than the end? Furthermore, it is the religion that has honored the seeds of Adam, as the Qur'an states:

﴾ *And We have honoured the Children of Adam, provided then with means of transport on land and sea, and We have bestowed on them good things, and have preferred them above many of those We created.* ﴿
(Al-Isra', 70)

It is the religion that has justice, beneficence, cooperation, righteousness, good and truth as general rules and absolute orders. So, is there any bit of supremacy of thought and stability of society beyond these values?

It is not strange, then, that Islam is the last of religions and that human beings do not need a new religion.

### 6. Mistake and Sin

This is Islam, the religion of humanity up to its highest stage, the religion of religious unity in its purity, and the religion of cosmic unity in the entirety of its sciences.

This is Islam that is calumniated by its opponents, who abuse it wrongfully through ignorance or make it their enemy while they know what it is. They fear it despite their schemes, so they commit sins and mistakes in order to make it spiteful to

their own people, who do not know its true nature, and to unsettle it in the hearts of those who believe in it.

The great mistake into which many Muslim immigrants fall is that they are not aware of the universality of Islam and its humane spirit, or they obviously oppose and deny it, conspire to engage in hostility with others, and make it permissible to deceive and betray them. Yet they agree together to respect them, praise the freedom they enjoy, and crowd to work for them under their control and the patronage of their laws.

Doing this and that, they present to the opponents of Islam a proof out of its own people and harm Islam more than its opponents do. May Allah have mercy on Abu At-Tayyib, who said in a poem:

> No enemy will attack the ignorant
> Unless the ignorant attacks himself first.

Now, who will defend me against those to whom I showed these facts out of Islam and their own present conditions? They have no patience, make trouble, and collect the most vile and foolish among them. They wish to put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but they insult knowledge with their ignorance, and yet they reckon that they do good work.

> The wise man's donkey did expound.

He said: If it were justly sound
I would have been binding, not bound,
I am simple in ignorance-round
But my owner therein is compound.

May Allah protect Islam against the evil of its opponents, the ignorance of its followers, and the negligence of its scholars.

## (7)

## ISLAM:

## THE RELIGION

## OF CIVILIZATION

**1.** Because it came with beliefs and laws that are suitable for any time and place, and because it views all people as equals and enforces social fraternity, Islam is the international religion. Because Islam is also able to cope with societies of different cultures and backgrounds and keep pace with development, it deserves to be the religion of civilization. But what is the Islamic concept of civilization?

**2.** Nomadic life keeps one as primitive as he was born, taking him away from knowledge, culture, and arts and imposing no social restrictions on him; whereas civilized life grants him education, makes him familiar with cultured lifestyles, and teaches him how to live brotherly and cooperatively within a community. Thus, civilization can be defined as a collection

of principles and values that refine man's lifestyle and take him out of himself. It urges him to stop thinking if his own welfare, leading him to take his fellows, society, or even the entire humanity into consideration. In fact, civilization refines man's emotions and feelings, promotes his way of thinking, widens his vision of the world, and elevates his behaviors to do good and act peacefully. There is no doubt that sound ways of thinking, tender feelings, clear vision, high-level culture, even manners and thoughtfulness, are important factors for the elevation of man's life.

This leads to another fact: civilization springs originally from within the human being. This is implied in the Qur'anic verse in which Allah says:

> ❴...*surely Allah does not change the condition of a people unless they change what is in themselves.*❵
>
> (Ar-Ra'd, 11)

We can also realize that civilization is not judged by quantity but by characteristics. This is why Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught that man is judged according to the degree of his piety, not on the basis of race, color, or wealth.

**3.** In this meaning, civilization is not synonymous with urbanization, where the latter reflects the shift of population from nomadic life or rural areas to cities and the resulting growth of urban areas. Thus urbanization arises to meet some of man's basic needs: to live in houses, enjoy a certain lifestyle, and develop the industries and tools he uses in his life. On the other hand, civilization symbolizes values deeply rooted in oneself, urging one to promote his feelings and sentiments, maintain clear vision, develop his way of thinking, and continuously refine his behaviors.

**4.** Knowing that values are the core of civilization and tools are the core of urbanization, which of them should prevail? And which should be in service of the other?

As one's hand is a tool in service of his thought, urbanization should be controlled by and in the service of civilization, since it is proved that man cannot establish himself as man without aspects of civilization. For if man concentrates his efforts to protect himself, enjoy different kinds of food, and use all possible means to fulfill his desires, he would not be distinguished from animals. He is man because he has the spiritual power that affects his behaviors, in which urbanization is of lower rank than civilization. But for the control wielded by civilization, man's desire for food, his

strongest desire, would turn him into an animal, and his desire for living would turn him into a tyrant.

Therefore, we can say that civilization originates from values and principles, while urbanization comes to meet man's needs and benefits. It is no wonder, then, that it is civilization that brings about people's happiness and prosperity, while it is urbanization, uncontrolled by values, that leads to their misery because it depends on egoism, dispute, wars, and in the end, destruction of life.

**5.** So long as civilization goes beyond the individual to all human beings wherever, whenever, and however they are, Islam will be the peak of civilization and the apex of development. It will be the great end to which humanity aspires, and the absolute ideal for which wise men and philosophers long.

There is no wonder about this, since Islamic values are absolute ones, not restricted to a certain country or a specific nation. Some revolutions of man's modern history were claimed to be humanitarian though they could (if this were correct) provide liberty, fraternity, and equality only to their people. They never went beyond their nations, and they were unable to do so. On this basis came the wars and expansions

of Napoleon I, for instance. In contrast, Islamic values are boundless.

Let's consider the value of Islamic justice, for example. It has wonderfully gone beyond all Muslims, not only to their enemies and other people of different beliefs and nations, but also to animals and other living creatures in the universe. The Qur'an says:

> ❮*...An ant said: "O you ants! Enter your dwelling places, lest Solomon and his hosts trample you without noticing!"*❯
>
> (An-Naml, 19)

This means that if Solomon and his hosts knew that they might crush the ants, they would not do so. If they had crushed the ants, it would not have been by intention but by lack of perception.

It is reported in a Prophetic hadith that a prophet slept once under a tree and an ant came and nipped him, so he commanded that the habitation of the ant be burned. Then Allah blamed him for burning ants that celebrate the praises of Allah just because one had nipped him (Muslim).

In Solomon's story with the people of Sheba, Solomon's threats did not prevent the hoopoe from saying—as the Qur'an relates

❮ *"I know something which you do not know...* ❯
(An-Naml, 22)

This report reflects the Islamic doctrine of acknowledging the right of the weak to defend and express themselves. The Qur'an conveys this acknowledgement via a weak bird, the hoopoe, and not via a falcon or an eagle, nor is it conveyed through a stalwart of the jinn or a great man who has knowledge of the Book. Undoubtedly, man has more due right to defend and express himself than birds or animals.

Generally speaking, Islam views civilization as a realization of all aspects of aesthetics, truth, goodness, and virtue of all kinds. In a hadith the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Allah is beautiful and He loves beauty" (Al-Bukhari and An-Nasa'i). The surface meaning of the hadith refers to outward as well as inward beauty represented in high level sentiments and sound ways of thinking.

In this sense, the Islamic concept of civilization may include features of urbanization such as adorning and embellishing the physical fabric of life. Therefore, no blame can be taken

on a Muslim for understanding a man's wearing silk and gold is merely detestable, not decisively forbidden. That is to say that it is just preferable for men not to wear silk or gold.[1]

**6.** As for the Islamic view of urbanization, it might seem strange for those who are used to understanding divine religions as a group of beliefs, rituals, and some moralistic recommendations that have nothing to do with life or secular affairs.

If this notion is true of most or even all other religions, it is not true of Islam. Islam has much interest for life and views industries, for instance, as a blessing of Allah upon people to facilitate their life and provide them with prosperity. The Qur'an tells about Prophet Noah saying

❮*So he began to construct the Ark*❯

(Hud, 38)

And it tells about Prophet David saying

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[1]Check the opinions on this question in *Fath Al-Bari* (vol. 10, p. 233); *Sunan An-Nasa'i* (vol. 8, p. 202); *Sunan At-Tirmidhi* (vol. 4, p. 190); *Nail Al-Awtar* (vol. 1, p. 66 and vol. 2, p. 82); *Fath Al-`Allam* (vol. 1, p. 102); *Al-Majmu`* (vol. 1, p. 203); Ibn Qudamah's *Al-Mughni* (vol. 1, p. 63); and Ash-Shirazi's *Al-Muhadhab.*

*❴And We taught him the making of metal coats of mail (for battles), to protect you in your fighting.❵*

(Al-Anbiya', 80)

Reporting about Solomon the Qur'an says

*❴And We caused a fount of (molten) brass to flow for him, and there were jinns that worked in front of him, by the leave of his Lord, and whosoever of them turned aside from Our Command, We shall cause him to taste the torment of the blazing Fire. They worked for him what he desired, (making) high rooms, images, basins as large as reservoirs, and (cooking) cauldrons fixed (in their places).❵*

(Saba', 12-13)

Thus, having achieved the items necessary for defense and other required purposes, industry proceeded to make life more prosperous, manufacturing items of luxury such as statues and sculptured images used for decoration. It should be noted, in this regard, that the use of such statues and images is not prohibited on the analogy of idols. In his *Tarikh Al-Hukama*, Al-Qafti claimed that Prophet Idris (Enoch) was the first to study medicine, draw city plans, and draw industrial tools so they might survive to later

generations. If this report is not correct, it *is* quite correct, according to Muslim scholars, that Islam calls for studying sciences, seeking knowledge, and having an interest in worldly affairs. It is really a great blessing of Allah, the Most Glorious.

In his *Jawahir Al-Qur'an,* Imam Al-Ghazali says:

> The Holy Qur'an includes reports and exhortations to seek knowledge in all sciences. If refers to medicine in the verse ❴*"And when I am ill, it is He Who cures me"*❵ (Ash-Shu`ara, 80) and to anatomy in the verse ❴*Who created you, fashioned you perfectly, and gave you due proportion*❵ (Al-Infitar, 7). As for astronomy, the Qur'an refers to the exact mathematical laws that bear witness to Allah's wisdom and also to His favors to His creatures, for we all profit from the heat and light, the seasons, and the numerous changes in the tides and the atmosphere on which the constitution of our globe and the maintenance of life depend:
>
> ❴*The sun and the moon run on their fixed courses (exactly) calculated*❵
>
> (Ar-Rahman, 5)

> In fact, the Qur'anic references to scientific laws governing the globe form a very long topic, and it is neither the right time nor place to clarify it. But, generally speaking, we are commanded to contemplate the Qur'anic texts to conclude what it combines of past and modern scientific laws.

This report of Imam Al-Ghazali reflects what the majority of Muslim scholars agree on: that this worldly life and all that it includes represent the right means of man's major end, true recognition of Allah. This is demonstrated by Imam Al-Ghazali's words: "Therefore, worldly life is one of the means by which man can recognize his Lord, Allah the Glorious."

It is reported that the Abbasside Caliph Harun Ar-Rashid had once determined to link the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea. But he canceled his decision on the basis of his counselors' plea that this would enable the Byzantines to reach Makkah, the holiest Islamic city. Later on, during the eighteenth century, Napoleon I refused the same idea but for different reasons. He and his scientists ignorantly feared that the Mediterranean water, which is at a higher level, would dominate that of the Red Sea. It is also known that `Amr bin Al-`As, the first Muslim governor of Egypt, linked the Nile

River with the Red Sea with a small canal called the Canal of the Commander of the Faithful.

The majority of Muslim scholars agree that all aspects of urbanization are necessary for preserving life in Muslim communities, and thus it is an individual duty to carry them out. In his *Al-Ihya'* (vol. 1, p.28), Imam Al-Ghazali says:

> Though there are many Islamic countries that do not have Muslim physicians, Muslims incline to study jurisprudence, especially controversial questions, while the majority of the country's population may be jurists. It is a pity that Muslims indulge in fulfilling an individual duty, which is undertaken by most members of the society, and ignore another individual duty, which has none to perform it.

The Islamic compromise between civilization and urbanization has been theoretically and practically clear to all people, specialized or not. This fact has penetrated so deep into the Muslim community that it has been reflected in their poetry. It is reported that the poet Ibn Abi Hafsah said to `Imarah bin `Aqil, "I think that Caliph Al-Ma'mun does not understand poetry." `Imarah replied, "How can this be? He is one of the most well-versed in poetry. In our poetic sessions

in the royal court, he is used to completing a poetic verse before its poet pronounces it for the first time." Ibn Abi Hafsah exclaimed, "Why then didn't he react to one of my best poetic verses praising him? I said:

> Caliph Al-Ma'mun is a really devout worshiper,
> While others have given all their interest to worldly gains."

Ibn `Aqil replied, "By this you have turned him into an aged hermit secluding himself in a mosque and having nothing to do. How can this be while the caliph is the one charged to dispose people's affair in this world? You had better say something similar to what your great-uncle said about Caliph Al-Walid:

> He does forget his share in this life,
> Nor does he neglect religion for this life."

It is clear that the poet referred to the meaning of the Qur'anic verse

> ❮*But seek, in that Allah has given you, the Hereafter, and do not forget your portion of this life...*❯
> (Al-Qasas, 77)

There is no doubt that the practical and scientific initiatives and achievements of the early Muslims constituted the basis for the European Renaissance. The Europeans could acquire these achievements from three major locations of the Muslim world: Syria, Cyprus, and Andalusia. Honest European scholars acknowledge that the effects of Islamic civilization still play an important role in European civilization and urbanization. Among these figures is the orientalist Edwin Howl, author of *Andalusia*, which was summarized by `Abbas Al-`Aqqad in *Al-Azhar* magazine in March 1959.

The effect of the Islamic civilization on the European Renaissance is so evident that some sciences still retain their Arabic names, such as algebra. After Bill Clinton succeeded against George Bush in the American presidential elections, he tried to increase the taxes levied on the American society. Upon this, on 18 February 1993, the *New York Times* published an article written by Ronald Reagan, former president of United States. In this article, Reagan addressed Clinton:

> Allow me to give you some advice said by Ibn Khaldun, the prominent Arab historian. He said that an empire starts with low taxes levied on the subjects and high national income in the state treasury. On the other

> hand, towards the downfall of an empire, the subjects witness a considerable increase in taxes and a severe decrease in the national income. Actually, I do not know Ibn Khaldun, though there might be some kind of friendship between him and myself.

It was by coincidence that this article was published the day after I had delivered a speech on the effect of Islamic civilization on the West in the Mosque of Abu Bakr As-Siddiq in Brooklyn, New York. I considered it as a demonstration of Allah's support of the message I was bearing to Muslims living in America, where some Muslims misunderstand Islam. In their view, Islam calls Muslims to hate non-Muslims and to keep away from all aspects, good or bad, of their civilization. They are wholly indulged in this notion and have migrated to achieve it, taking terrorism and fighting against women as their slogans.

Trying to correct their views, I faced them openly declaring, "You are a stumbling block in the way of spreading Islam in the United States. Your concentration on these issues makes people of these States fight against Islam on two channels, terrorism and women." Following the bombing of the New York World Trade Center, a fierce press and media campaign was launched against Islam, concentrating on both

channels. They had better make use of their living in America to refute what the West claims against Islam.

**6.** As a matter of fact, Muslims throughout the ages acted and reacted, affected and profited from different world civilizations and styles of urbanization. Yet, Muslims living in America and headed by Sheikh `Umar `Abdur-Rahman deny this notion totally. On the first day of my journey to America, they encountered me with the question, "What is legal judgment pertaining to singing? Is it permissible or prohibited?" That night they asked, "Is it permissible for a Muslim family to celebrate the birthday of anyone of its members?" On the next day they inquired, "What is the judgment on letting one's beard grow? Is it obligatory, or what?" These are the types of questions in which they are interested. Yet, I thought that my efforts to expose and explain major Islamic views would affect them and lead them to the right way, but I was calling dead people.

You are dear and close to them if you follow their way and abide by their group's opinions concerning different questions. By such questions they intend to draw the Muslims' attention away from the internal questions in Muslim societies. It is a real pity that they not only believe that it is obligatory to obey the ruler even if he is unjust, but

also they take doctrine to distinguish between a real Muslim and Kharijite (a member of an early splinter group in Islam). They make this issue a major one: they judge those who claim that Allah abides only in the heavens or try to find an interpretation of the verse ❮*And He is Allah in the heavens and on the earth*❯ (Al-An`am, 3) as transgressing the limits of Allah.

You are loved by them if, while abroad, you waste no effort to attack and insult your home country (Egypt) and its ruler and government. For me, one should criticize his government in the way he likes while being among them in his homeland, for it is a praised, courageous act. On the other hand, if one does not follow their course and adopt their views, he is considered their foe. It is difficult, however, for a scholar to find himself between two extremes: either to cope with their folly or to ignore their way and be fought as an enemy. In the second case they would resist him by all possible means, even through a foolish person who abides by no values or morals.

Though some of this group declare themselves to be ignorant, to use their very word, they may pass a judgment on the actions of men of knowledge or even declare them to be without knowledge. I was informed that some of this

group have already displayed arrogant behavior towards prominent Muslim scholars, such as Sheikh Muhammad Mitawalli Ash-Sha`rawi, Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, and others. They bear the ridiculous slogan of "Teach me, but I am your master." Is there a more foolish contradiction than this? It happened once that some of them said to me, "You should know that we are excused, for we are ignorant." I said, "Excuse me, you have double ignorance." "What do you mean by double ignorance?" I replied, "It is the one recognized by a donkey owned by a person who claims to be wise." Then I recited some lines of Arabic poetry:

The wise man's donkey did expound
He said: If it were justly sound
I would have been binding, not bound
For I am simple in ignorance-round
But my owner therein is compound.

7. On 14 October 1992, accompanied by some members of this group of Muslims, I visited the World Trade Center. This was before its bombing in February 1993, which has been taken as a basis for attacking Islam and Muslims. The World Trade Center is a high building with more than one hundred floors located near the Hudson River. I said to one

of my companions, "Alas for Muslims! This huge building was erected by non-Muslims while you live among them. Why don't you try to acquire the technology they have achieved? Yes, this is because you concentrate your efforts to discuss minor issues. When will you wake up?"

The situation gets more tragic if you know that this group strictly controls their leader, and he obediently follows their tracks. A journalist for the New York *Sawt As-Salam* newspaper endeavored to disclose the secret in the terrorism question. He got a promise from Sheikh `Umar himself to tell him the truth in a meeting. But the sheikh broke his word. Furthermore, the journalist attempted to arrange for a meeting between Sheikh `Umar and high-level person for the same purpose. But, as usual, the Sheik refused. It is this group who convinced Sheikh `Umar to break his word the first time and refuse the meeting the second. The journalist reported both episodes on page 12 of the January 1993 issue. One really does get perplexed trying to decide who is the leader and who is the led in this group.

**8.** We went to that land to impart the Islamic civilization to the people, but two obstacles confront the fulfillment of the mission. The first of them is the group of Muslims mentioned above. The problem gets more worrisome, alarming and

depressing to know that a branch of an Islamic organization is working in America with the purpose of controlling the largest number of mosques possible and injecting their attitudes. An example of this is the case of the New Jersey Islamic Center, which used to provide many services for Muslims. This center was headed by one of the officials of that organization, who created a conflict with people working in it. Those who followed instructions were rewarded by being moved to the organization's headquarters, where they were granted good career opportunities.

The second obstacle facing *da`wah* work in America is this group's attitude of judging others to be unbelievers. Sheikh `Umar himself sponsored the distribution of Murshid bin `Abdul `Aziz bin Sulaiman An-Najdi's *Clear Evidence for the Disbelief of the Saudi Dynasty* for only five dollars. Is it so easy to judge Muslims as unbelievers?!

As for the disputes of Muslims living in America, I may report the following. The New Jersey Islamic Center in Jersey City adopts the views of Imam Al-Ghazali and competes with another school called `Ibad Ar-Rahman. The center made use of the financial crisis of the other school and tried to crush it. I tried to conciliate between the center's administration and their opponents, but I was warned by the

center's administration to stop because it was impossible to end the conflict. On the second page of its March 1993 issue, *Sawt As-Salam* published a condemnation of the center administration's stance. Is it not strange that this happens in an American state comprising such a large Muslim and Arab community that an Egyptian immigrant applied as a candidate for the office of city mayor? He is a physician, called `Ismat Zaqlamah, working in one of the largest hospitals of New Jersey.

**9.** The disagreement between Sheikh `Umar and myself is threefold: methodological, conceptual, and moral.

**a.** Methodological disagreement lies in the intellectual views of both of us. He believes that the relation between Muslims and non-Muslims should be based on enmity and war. It is no wonder, then, to know that his followers believe that it is permissible to rob the Americans, deceive them, and never say *Salam* to them or congratulate them on their feasts.

I, on the other hand, believe that this relation should be based on peace, acquaintance, and cooperation, unless non-Muslims act to break this relation. Bearing in mind the gap between both concepts and their effects on Muslims and non-Muslims, I delivered a number of lectures on Islamic

civilization and Islamic views of human relations. A press conference on this was held with a journalist from Reuters, and a summary was published in the February 1993 issue of *Sawt As-Salam*.

The press conference was on Friday, 8 January 1993 at the house of Hajj Engineer `Abdul-Qadir Kallash on Flat Bush Avenue, Brooklyn. Hajj `Abdul-Qadir is a Syrian Muslim who used to be attacked by Sheikh `Umar in his lectures and sermons for not accepting his views. The press conference was attended by Mr.Fathi Hijazi, counselor of the New York *Sawt As-Salam,* and Professor Muhammad Mahdi, secretary general of the Islamic Conference Organization, who translated my speech. Truly, the status of Muslims living in the States creates a dire need for such meetings. At the end, the journalist declared that he learned more about Islam in that meeting than he had in thirty years.

**b.** As for my conceptual disagreement with Sheikh `Umar, it is related to some juristic issues, such as women in Islam. The Sheikh claims that women should be violently subjected to men's wishes and that polygyny is the natural and original base of the man-woman relationship. Other subjects include the denial of delivering *salam* to people attending a learning session on the plea that it is a Sunnah practice, while

attending learning sessions is an obligation. Sheikh 'Umar believes this, though Imam An-Nawawi, in his encyclopedic work *Al-Majmu'*, verifies that it is permissible to deliver *salam* to people attending a learning session. This is concluded on analogy with the permission to deliver *salam* to a person performing prayer, who can reply by gesturing with his hand.[2] Which is more obligatory, attending a learning session or performing prayer?

Another subject is the question of prohibiting taking interest and whether the conditions of Muslim immigrants in Western communities ease the prohibition or not. Sheikh 'Umar decisively views transactions with banks that deal with interest as a prohibited act, although some forms of transactions are unanimously permissible. Someone asked me about this after Sheikh 'Umar had delivered his opinion, and I explained, in the presence of the Sheikh, some of the

[2]Based on a hadith reported by Imam Muslim in the Book of Mosques, Abu Dawud in the Book of Prayer, chapter on Returning the Greeting (Salam) While Performing Prayer; An-Nasa'i in Referring by Hand as a Reply to the Greeting (Salam) While Performing Prayer; and Ibn Majah (1018).

permissible forms of transactions with such banks, and he did not comment.

A third subject is the question whether the Qur'an includes verses that have been abrogated by other verses? I am going to clarify all these questions in a separate portion of the book to guide to the right way.

**c.** As regards my moral disagreement with Sheikh 'Umar, it concerns the denial of the virtues of others. Really, it is only virtuous people who can acknowledge the virtues of others. One's denial of another's virtue proves his own lack of virtue. I have never encountered people who disgrace people of knowledge as this group does. I criticized their Sheikh, but he never cared. Had it been an individual case against me, I would have accepted it, but they did the same with many of those who preceded me.

Though they know that it is a religions and social duty to respect the aged, they neglect that and imitate the worst acts of people in the non-Muslim communities. The Americans who participate in the congressional elections are accustomed to publicly insulting each other. But does this justify similar behavior of Muslims who have undoubtedly

forgotten their Islamic morals? They had better preach Islamic morals to this setting.

The majority of this group, who have nothing to do with the group leadership, detest such behavior and sympathize with the attacked figures. This was one of the reasons for the group's dispersion, having hatred and enmity as the core of the relation among all its members. It is no wonder, then, to know that it has become a practice of Sheikh `Umar to break and disperse allied groups. He did this in the New York Al-Faruq Mosque and the New Jersey As-Salam Mosque.

Having neglected Islamic morals to achieve their ends, they proceeded to deny settled scholastic rules and authentic texts. They deny a Prophetic hadith conveying that one's conversion to Islam on condition that he performs only one prayer a day may be exceptionally accepted. They deny it though it is reported by Ahmad, Abu Dawud, and Ash-Shawkani (*Nail Al-Awtar*, vol. 7, Chapter on Accepting One's Conversion to Islam Provided Invalid Conditions). Ash-Shawkani reported that neither Abu Dawud nor Al-Mundhiri commented on the hadith. Furthermore, the hadith is reported in vol. 10 of Ibn Qudamah's *Al-Mughni*. Yet, the followers of Sheikh `Umar deny the hadith because it does not fit with their objectives and personal desires. Concerning

similar hadiths, Sheikh `Umar said that he had checked the references of this hadith and similar ones and found them all to be weak or invented. They have committed all kinds of harm against others, Muslims and non-Muslims.

Though Sheikh `Umar and his faction distribute a book accusing the Saudi Dynasty of blasphemy and he severely attacks them in his lectures and sermons, he may ask one of the members of the Washington Saudi Institute for support against his opponents. He is used to severely attacking anyone who does not yield to his requests.

This is not strange, however, so long as he tells lies. Yes, his lies are recorded in official documents and public audio reports. Sheikh `Umar used to visit the Brooklyn Abu Bakr As-Siddiq Mosque and meet with its board of directors. Following the arrest of the general manager and other members of the board, the Sheikh was asked whether or not he knew any of the arrested group. He denied his acquaintance with any of them. Later, an Egyptian attendee named Hussein asked him, "What do you think of a sheikh who tells lies?" Sheikh `Umar replied, "It is permissible for a sheikh to tell lies if the trial is an unjust one." I wish people of knowledge would tell whether Sheikh `Umar's answer is correct or not.

The Western Renaissance and modern civilization are based on the philosophy of materialism against the unseen, human intellect against divine texts, and racial superiority against human fraternity. Furthermore, from the Crusades up to the present day, when Islam is concerned in any situation, they will not only totally reject it, but also fabricate falsehood and calumny against Islam and Muslims. Isn't it logical, then, that the image of Muslims in America is as bad as we have seen in the above report? What a pity!

Can anyone blame me for releasing my pain in a way that I cannot save only myself but also save them from the condition in which they put themselves? A poet wrote:

> They made me drink and said don't sing.
> But if they forced the mountains of Sulaimah
> To drink what I have drunk
> The mountains would have sung.

I do not know whom blame should be placed on. On those people? Or on our ostracizing systems? Or on both of them?

If the opinion of the weak person were heard, I would say: Take away authority from people of Islamic trend. This is better. The suppressed opinion is always sought, and its good

and bad manifestations are emotionally received. But open opinion is received by knowledge and reason. Therefore, it distinguishes between correct and incorrect, truth and falsehood, and guidance and error.

## (8)

## ISLAM AND CHANGE

Change (Arabic *taghyir*), which means positivism and action, is something different from alteration (Arabic *taghaiyur*), which means acceptance and being affected upon. Islam makes the Muslim an active person in himself and within his society, and not a surrendered and affected person. Change comprises the meaning of operation and multiplication and continuation of the work. When Allah says:

> ❨*Surely Allah does not change the condition of a people unless they change what is in themselves*❩
>
> (Ar-Ra'd, 11)

He also says:

> ❨*This is because Allah would never change a favour which He has bestowed on a people unless they change what is in their souls*❩
>
> (Al-Anfal, 53)

It seems as if Allah is saying: Erase what is in yourselves of the feelings of ignorance (*jahiliyah*), and let it be the task of the nation. Then direct this change to follow Allah's religion, both as creed and system. So, if you believe and change Allah's blessings in accordance with your religion, Allah will change your condition.

Islam, through this social logic in the message of change, deals with the issue of sentiment and thought, i.e., passivity and fear of performing the duty of change, placing blame on others, grieving for what is missed, and living with thought and emotion in the past in the name of *Salafiyah* or in any other name, the while neglecting and absolutely rejecting the present, and "taking decisions directly from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and *ijtihad* of the *Salaf*."[1]

It is highly favored to take injunctions from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet and to be guided by the *ijtihad* of the *Salaf*. But who is it that takes directly from

[1] *Ijtihad* is the making of Islamic legal judgments when there is no clear injunction in the Qur'an or Hadith. *Salaf* refers to the early generations of righteous Muslims. *Salafiyah* here refers to a movement in contemporary Islam to live in close imitation of the *Salaf*. (editor)

these sources? There are many of them, here and there, who are ignorant of the beginnings of the language of the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the *Salaf*. So, they are like the person who seeks water from a place other than its own.

Another point is where are the issues of the present? The *Salaf* faced their present with this *ijtihad*. In return, they enriched thought and responded to the issues of their day. The true *Salafiyah* is to be guided by them in facing the present according to the rules of *ijtihad*, and not in restricting oneself to their issues of *ijtihad*. Therefore, among their golden issues in the *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) of *ijtihad* was that of changing *ijtihad* injunctions due to changes over time. By doing so, Islamic juristic thought remains a continuous process to face and respond to every new thing, and, so, and our claim that Islam is able to deal with every time and place is achieved.

In the West, Muslims face this new condition by refusing to think, despite living within it, working and earning a livelihood with all its good and evil. In their living, they do not go to the trouble of elucidation and change. But their ultimate concern is that dissemination of detestation, competing with each other for trivial leadership and inertness, restricting themselves to one understanding when

there are many interpretations. This is the most dangerous disease of the mind, of which our *Salaf* are innocent! To me it seems a general catastrophe.

In his book *At-Tazwir Al-Mugaddas*, Sheikh Abdul Wadud Shalabi mentioned about his journey to Australia that Muslims there are preoccupied with trivialities, leaderships, and redirecting most of their activities in ceremonies and banquets! In his comment on the level of Australian *da'wah* he said:

> Once, a university student came to the mosque to profess her Islam. The person who was entrusted with the affairs of *da'wah* said to her, "Welcome, but are you ready, if you commit a theft, to have your hand cut off?" She said, "No." He asked, "Are you ready, if you commit adultery, to be stoned?" She said, "No." He said, "Then your Islam is not valid!" In turn, the girl departed and nothing was known about her!

A person returned from Germany told me the same about the immigrant Muslims there. The same is also said by a person who visited England. He said, "Once a certain group wanted to introduce Islam to Englishmen. They spread out on the street and began to eat their food!" Muslims are at the same

level in America, with some difference in minor things. Here, I found myself unable to discover the general cause of this behavior because of the difference in time and place between those people. And I have nothing to say except what the Muslim says for every affliction: "Surely we belong to Allah, and surely to Him we are returning!"

**2.** The gist of Islam, both thought and way of life, is that it is a struggle between duty and reality, between what already exists and what should exist. First Islam faced the Arabs and changed what was in them. Then the Arabs faced the world with Islam and changed what was within it. So the surface of the earth was illuminated after darkness, and human beings participated in establishing the edifice of Islamic and Arabic civilization, making time prostrate on its threshold for more than a thousand years!

This is the sign of Islam and the witness of history that remains for Islam today and will last as long as time lasts. By this sign and its historical witness, Islam faces the city of this age the same way it faced civilizations of the past.

During this encounter, the method of Islam was purification of human nature (*fitrah*) and revitalization of intellect, not violence and destruction. If war and violence had established

Islam, it would have needed the same to last, and it would have withdrawn from the earth and hearts. Islam's political and military sovereignty has vanished, but it has remained advancing on the earth and overwhelming hearts. This is a unique sign, and its likeness is not found throughout history.

Nowadays, Muslims have forgotten this sign and are ignorant of this mission. They surrendered themselves to the reality and, in turn, were overcome and made subservient to such an extent that reality became the stronger pretext of their enemies to make them lose their right and make them silent about their mission. And those who sold their consciences ate at every banquet under the pretext of reality, while many pens, along with their owners, shouted at the wrongdoers under the pretext of reality. Up till now, the followers of reality have inherited the positions of obedience to every unjust one till truth and error are confused. Truth has become vague for its seeker, and the rent has widened beyond repair.

History has many questions about nations and their development. The question regarding our nation (*ummah*) is this: Is our nation in the position of leadership, change, and effectiveness or in the position of surrender and obedience to the reality which is led by others to what they want?

In our present time, there are two urgent demands before Muslims that cannot admit delay, difference, or preference to any other thing.

First, protecting the self along with its potentialities, which guarantees the nation's personality and entity, i.e., a Muslim nation that has an effective mission in the world.

Second, achieving material and immaterial methods by which the nation is able to restore its personality and perform its mission.

To abandon these two elements is to strengthen this existing loss and expected fusion into non-Islamic entities that hate Islam and its people. Foreign ambitions are very determined to dominate Muslims, particularly Arabs, politically, economically, and religiously. Their determination and scheme to overcome our belief, dominate our creed, and remove it from its guidance are more dangerous.

Our enemy is very serious to achieve such domination, and we help others against ourselves. Some of us deputize others to defame Islam and pursue every means for achieving this in thought, art, or economy.

It is sufficient for us that these people numerate Israeli favors on us as they claim. What a grievous ignominy that we seek our food from America and our bananas and apples from Israel! After all of this, the questioner ironically and strangely asks about the relation between religion and art. The followers' pens compete with each other to praise the usurping enemy and consider surrender to him the ultimate modernity and progress!

All of this is done under the pretext that is coined by our illusion and the plotting of our enemy, namely, the New World System. I read a newspaper published in New York, *Sawt As-Salam,* which reproached the Arabs and Muslims for raising such a description as the "New World System". It went further to state:

> It has become clear that all the conspiracies and plots planned against the Muslim nation are beyond description. Despite all of this, there is still a majority of Muslims, especially Egyptians, who are ignorant of or ignore the danger of these conspiracies and their effect on our past, present, and future. The most prominent of these issues is what is called the New World System. And we do not know from where our rulers and thinkers brought this designation. In the

> West they call it the New World Order. Here, there is a difference to which we should be heedful, i.e., the difference between "order", as called by Westerners, and "system", as called by Muslims. In other words, there is a difference between system, which requires thought, rules, and commitment, and the dictating of orders, which is away from these meanings. (*Sawt As-Salam*, March 1993)

This is our illusion aboard. And our weakness at home is we blind our eyes from the danger of this plotting and engage ourselves in superficial and minor issues, while they plot for what they call the Crescent of the Middle East. This is a neat system that comprises the Arab and Islamic countries; even the Islamic republics in the former Soviet Union are also classified into the arc of this crescent. This is done in order to make Israel its palpitating heart and manager mind!

Moreover, I was told by one of the trustworthy men from the staff of the Faculty of Shari`ah and Law in Cairo that there was a directive sent to the faculty which demanded the restriction of the study of *fiqh* to the field of worship. If conspiracies against Islam have reached to such an extent, what do we await?

Furthermore, I was shown the 1993-94 first term examination of the Shari'ah Department, Al-Mansoura University, and I found it totally confined to the field of inheritance.

Precisely and specifically, this is what is sought for our religion—if we still have any relation to it—namely, for it to be kept within mosques and places of worship. In case our religion is allowed to go out of these places, it is only in the field of personal affairs. But if Islam enters public morals, social relations, commercial and economic transactions, norms of politics and ruling, international relations, authority and system, civilization and *da'wah*, beware! You are called a radical, fundamentalist, *Salaf*, and traditionalist who calls for antiquity.

Truly, I am not so frightened by outside conspiracies, but I am so frightened and afflicted with worry and anxiety by intelligent and foolish plotting that is designed by our own hands.

Truly, we are in a dire need for a wise awakening which is able to face conspiracies, revitalize feeling, invest thought, and place the orders of the *shari'ah* in their right place. It does not replace the higher by the lower, or vice versa. This

awakening presents Islam in a clear vision, so it does not make the texts pertaining to defense the essence of bloody relations with others and claim the abrogation of the verses of peace. Some of this has already taken place—no, all of this has already taken place. And Allah is the last refuge!

(9)

## IS ALL REVELATION EQUAL

## REGARDING OBLIGATION?

**1.** Great matters are only fulfilled by great men, and weak determination cannot endure great responsibilities. In regard to religion and its *da'wah*, when belief becomes weak or when its responsibilities become great, some people retreat from responsibilities and push minor matters to places of greater ones, make equal things that are not equal, understand a partial view, prohibit a comprehensive view, and look dimly towards the future. In justifying all this, they are not lacking in the shaping of arguments to agree with their whim. So did Plato do to justify his escaping from the ruling issued against him. In contrast was his teacher, Socrates. When his pupils prepared his escape from execution by poisoning, he said, "I should not set a bad example by escaping from the law." And when the pupil Plato—whose philosophy was so confused with that of his teacher that they could not be distinguished from each

other—escaped, he was asked, "You fled but not your teacher?" To justify his escape he said, "I should not give the law chance to err again."

"All of these are of Islam!" This is what was said to me in America, as it was said in Egypt before and after that, to justify the occupation of their work, *da'wah*, and thought in trivialities and offshoots and in what agrees with their inclination to envy and hatred. It is the same with the all these issues: the ruling pertaining to beards and mustaches, the garment and its length, singing and music, prohibition of birthdays, non-Muslims entering mosques, reciting the Qur'an within it, graves and their depth, beards and their length, *niqab* (face veil) and *hijab* (head covering), cleaning the teeth with the finger or tooth-stick,[1] charges of disbelief, profligacy and hypocrisy, Allah's establishment on the throne, Allah being in the heaven, claiming that they are the only monotheistic people and all others are polytheists (followers of graves), shouting in every place that a certain hadith is fabricated, disseminating reprehension and aversion to anyone who disagrees with them, progressing in *da'wah*

[1]Ash-Shirazi said in *Al-Muhadhab*: "Passing the fingers on the teeth is not enough to be called cleaning of the teeth." An-Nawawi also said

through this dissemination, searching for defects of people and circulating them, restricting Islam to the verses of killing, declaring and insinuating that political assassination is part of Islam and jihad, calling to confine woman in her house, prohibiting her education, claiming that "breaking her head is the correct way to educate her", calling to take other wives besides one's own without need ("for this is the legal essence and negligence of it is contradiction of the essence"), claiming that war is the essence of the relation Muslims with non-Muslims, and upon this they make it permissible to shed his blood, steal his property, betray him, and receive him with a frowning face.

Some Muslims in Holland wrote to me about these problems. I also found them in America. They are also found in Italy.

Therefore, what wonder:

> ﴾*Is this a legacy they have passed from one to another? But they are an insolent people*﴿
>
> (Adh-Dhariyat, 53)

They made all of these issues equal in importance and equal to the *da`wah* to Allah and His religion in these countries

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in *Al-Majmu`*: "The two hadiths pertaining to cleaning the teeth with the fingers are weak."

which are prepared to accept Islam due to its human universality and because they have hearts, mature minds, and freedom of belief.

As for the existing great issues of Islam in which the Muslims live and suffer nowadays—such as the loss of sacred places, the fight against the awakening, the killing and degradation of Muslims, the plotting against the establishment of their religious state, and depriving them of any modern weapons—if you try to warn them against the danger of this methodology regarding the present and future of Islam, they confidently and obstinately say, "Jerusalem will never be liberated except by those who grow their beards and wear a *jilbab* (tunic)." According to the Arabic dictionary, a *jilbab* is a woman's garment.

**2.** If we are guided to an answer to the questions Is the *shari`ah* equal as regards obligation, our relation towards revelation will be corrected, some of us will be relieved of burdens, stubbornness, and oppression, we will be relieved of obstinacy and disputes, our efforts will be directed to our great and crucial issues, and this dissension which is introduced as the best weapon for our enemies will vanish.

Within this quarrel, the issue of dialogues must be determined lest efforts be wasted and debate be turned into argumentation or haughtiness. And let the method of dialogue be as Imam Ash-Shafi`i expressed: "I did not ever engage in a debate with anyone with the intention of overcoming him. And if I debated with anyone, I hoped the truth would be brought by his hands." Abu Yusuf said: "O people, seek Allah's pleasure through your knowledge. I did not ever sit in a session with the intention of modesty but I stood up victorious. And I did not ever sit in a session with the intention of overcoming people therein but I was defeated."

Therefore, what is the question? Is it that some *shari`ah* rulings are bad and some are otherwise? If we say "Yes," we will be untruthful and make reason a governor over the *shari`ah*, and we will regress to the state of the seculars who imitated the European thinkers of the eighteenth century who—for some reasons—elevated the intellect until they worshiped it. Therefore the question is not one of goodness in itself, but of comparative goodness. Is the *shari`ah*, which is wholly good in itself, all of the same degree of goodness, or are there some parts which exceed others in goodness? Is it all legally of the same degree pertaining to obligation?

We have thus clarified the subject of research lest we fall into confusion and each one understands as he chooses.

Here, there is a false argument, which is their claim that all revelation is of equal rank. The wonder is that this claim was said to me in America by their Sheikh and again through pamphlets that were circulated in the city of Al-Mansourah to oppose me. The claim is that it is all revelation, meaning that it is all of equal rank, which requires those people to divide their efforts and *da`wah* equally among all issues of *shari`ah*. Why, if all revelation is equal, do we neglect our crucial issues? Then our efforts are directed to disregarding the great issues such as the unity of the nation, independence in its resources, directing such resources and their revenue for the interest of Muslims, the dignity of the Muslims and those who are under their care, independence of the nation in its policies, lost sacred places, the excluded *Shari`ah*, Muslim bloodshed, the future of immigrant Muslims and their progeny, the forgotten mission of the nation, the international presentation of Islam and fighting the ideological and media campaigns against it, narrow or false understanding of Islam, strategies of powerful countries to achieve Israeli domination of the Islamic world, raising our children to believe in Islam and its issues, the instruments of

moral and material power which enable Muslims to achieve their hopes.

It is a tragedy, a weakness of mind and manhood, to be heedless of these issues, or to heed them with stupidity and say as it was said before: These issues will never be achieved except by those who grow their beards and wear *jilbab*. Is it not right to say these lines of poetry in response to this weakness of intuition and manhood?

> Don't be attracted by beards and images around you.
> Nine tenths of what you see are cows.[2]

Those who say that the legislation is of various degrees criticize those who claim it is all equal for their concentration on issues and sunnahs which are away from the modern issues of Muslims, despite their criticalness and gravity as existing reality reveals. Truly, I did not say what I said before except due to what I witnessed of this abandonment by American Muslims with whom I lived and who invited me to America. I asked them in hopes to awake them: How many Americans converted to Islam at your hands?

> ❮*On that day they will have no excuse, nor will they know what to say.*❯

(Al-Qasas, 66)

This concentration on secondary matters keeps them away from the propagation of Islam and its representation in this fertile land. It also keep them unaware of conspiracies that seek to destroy them and Islam, even to destroy their Islamic truth, whereas we should protect our truth while some of those people have slipped in among us.

This concentration paves the way for our enemies' desires and distracts the nation from life or death issues that are not exaggeration and perfection. This concentration directs their attention to trivial objectives, as I witnessed, such as overcoming the opponent—whoever does not agree with us is our enemy—, membership of the administrative council of the mosque, gathering for an *aqiqah* (banquet for a newborn child), breaking the fast together, breaking hearts by charging those who disagree with them, seeking the judgment of the ignorant against the scholars. Yes, by Allah, these are their issues here and there!

Moreover, historical examples are proofs against the Byzantine dispute about which came first, the egg or the chicken, which destroyed its people. The same is the

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[2]Ibn Al-Qayim, *Miftah Dar As-Sa`adah.*

argumentation concerning how many angels can stand on the head of a pin! In the history of ancient eastern philosophy, Herudotus narrated that once he witnessed a conflagration in an Egyptian city. The concern of the people was directed, not to rescue the city and its people, but to rescue the cats, for they thought that gods were incarnated in them! In our modern time, the same calamity took place. Some people ascended a mountain of Lebanon to seclude themselves for worship. They thought that this was the ultimate degree of religiosity. Thereupon, Imam Abu `Isa Al-Isfrayini ascended to them and said, "O you who have eaten the grass (out of isolation), does it please Muhammad that you retreat yourselves on this mountain and leave his nation for the innovators to play with?" They replied "O our teacher, we could not endure this, but you are the one who is able to do that (with the help of Allah)." Consequently, he descended and wrote his book entitled *Al-Jami` Baina Al-Maqul wa Al-Manqul* (*The Comprehensive on Rational and Textual Injunctions*).

This excessiveness has led them to reject fixed and well-defined practices of the Sunnah and of the *Salaf* by whom we have been guided. Among these is their rejection of hanging some supplications of the Sunnah on the wall, despite their being narrated by some Companions and scholars of *ijtihad.*

They also reject the narration that stated that some leading scholars of the Sunnah washed a certain *jubbah* (a long outer garment with sleeves) of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and used the water as a medicine for the sick. They also deny the narration pertaining to the recitation of Surahs Yasin, Ar-Ra`d, and Al-Baqarah on the person who is approaching death. Likewise, they deny the narration regarding placing green palm leaves on a grave. This refers to Buraidah Al-Aslami (may Allah be pleased with him), who requested to have two palm leaves placed on his grave. Al-Bukhari reported in the chapter "Placing Palm Leaves on Graves" that Buraidah requested that two palm leaves be placed on his grave. It is also narrated in the chapter "*Adhkir* (a kind of plant with a good smell) and Grass on the Grave". Moreover, in *Al-Fath*, Ibn Al-Mundhir explained the hadith about *adhkir*: "The grass that is mentioned in the narration of Al-Bukhari is not among the words of the narration about *adhkir*, so Al-Jahidh said that by mentioning grass, Al-Bukhari wanted to caution us that it is appended to *adhkir*."

Furthermore, there are many graves of Jews in Brooklyn, so whenever they pass by them, they curse them! They also deny the hadith in Al-Bukhari that reads, "Don't curse the dead, for they have ended their term and their works (in this world)." This hadith applies to Muslims and non-Muslims.

By the same token, they reject the narration in Muslim pertaining to weeping on the graves of the tormented. And how many shouts and denials they raise against the prayer of the ever-repentant, which is called by the Shafi`i School the Prayer of Negligence (i.e., the one which is neglected), although it is supported by many hadiths and also by Allah:

❮*They slept not but a little of the night*❯

(Adh-Dhariyat, 17)

Among those who thoroughly studied and examined this issue is Imam Ash-Shawkani, in *Nail Al-Awtar* (vol. 3, p. 54) in the chapter "About Prayer between Sunset and Night Prayers".

There are many other issues beside these on which they argue without any clear proofs, but out of disputation and haughtiness, so much so that they deny the verse that reads:

❮*And Allah is the One Who in heaven is God, and in earth is God*❯

(Az-Zukhruf, 84)

Did you ever see Muslims who claim that they call for Islam and that they and their leader are the elite among Muslims indulge in rebellion and repulsion to the extent that they deny

a verse from the Qur'an? And I bear witness that they do that, not out of mere rejection, but out of pride and aggression. All of this is done along with breaking the etiquette of research and debate. They are in moral degradation in which they lie and ❨*they swear to a lie while they know*❩ (Al-Mujadilah, 14) and in which they harm knowledge and age. They also defile the sanctity of the mosque by shouting and contracting sales within it and with obscene reviling through lessons and Friday sermons. The wonder is that the only thing which makes a person nearer to them is this obscene reviling! And you will attain the status of the elite among them if you wish to kill such-and-such person. No wonder that the person who is known by them and us for his ignorance and illiteracy writes a book of ignorance, nonsense, and contradiction called *Caliphate.* In it he praises his sheikh and quotes in support of his caliphate the appointment of Ibn Umm Maktum as successor by the Prophet (peace be upon him) on the day of Uhud! This succession was in leading the prayer and not in the caliphate. And in the book he issues the death sentence in a trial that does not exceed three hours! I do not know how it was accepted by the one who claims that he is the leading caller of the Islamic nation and who calls for shedding this blood if their state were established. In his opinion, the [former] Sheikh of Al-Azhar, Gad Al-Haqq, should be punished for

slander and his testimony should be rejected forever! Did this "legislator scholar" know what is the punishment for slander? Could what the Shiekh of Al-Azhar publicly declared—that Jerusalem is an Islamic land and it is an individual duty on Muslims, rulers, and people to liberate it from the hands of the Jews—intercede for him?

All these above-mentioned examples of secondary issues may be more than what is required, but I aimed at making the reader share in my grief over their state. Isn't seeing and hearing with his own eyes and ears the polemics on these issues and the like in which those immigrants live enough to kill one who is free and zealous in his religion? After that, they make their ignorance, false knowledge, and snobbery the criteria to judge every visiting scholar.

How many times I was told about their abuse of honorable scholars who occupy a high place in the hearts of Muslims! As for *da'wah* there in that land prepared for Islamic plantation and its seeds, it did not ever cross their minds. I doubted charging them with the desire for devastation and destruction until much evidence and many proofs were provided me. Not to mention this book, *Caliphate*, which is written by an ignorant person who declares within it the death sentence without trail. I also doubted until I knew the

statement of their sheikh: "Assassination is a prescribed obligation and terrorism is a duty." I heard the same from him personally. If their sheikh was asked by journalists, he claimed that he does not call for terrorism, for Islam is not a religion of terrorism. What a wonder! Which of the two shiekhs should we believe, the one who declares in our hearing, "Jihad is only through political assassination," or the one who says to newspaper, "No terrorism"?

Let us now return to the subject of research, i.e., claiming that all the teachings of *shari'ah* are of equal rank. By the way, it is one of their issues there.

The most difficult thing for any idea or religion is to address various individuals that are different in abilities and talents with one speech. This is like pouring different substances into one mold. The nature with which people were created demands their dissimilarity with respect to their mental faculties and readiness. This is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "What I have forbidden to you, avoid; what I have ordered you (to do), do as much of it as you can. It was only their excessive questioning and their disagreeing with their prophets that destroyed those who were before you." (Al-Bukhari)

Since Islamic truths are of two types, absolute and relative, there is no harm in disagreeing over them. The Companions of the Prophet disagreed with each other over those relative truths without any enmity. The Prophet (peace be upon him) admitted their disagreement in some cases. Thereupon, this has become a procedure for Muslims. Among the fruits of this procedure were freedom of research and freedom of speech. As a result, Islamic thought was enriched. Many sciences, which represented the civilization of Islamic thought later on, appeared. These include scholastic theology (*'ilm al-kalam*), which represents the pinnacle of free thought, and the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*), which represents the way of deduction and is the pinnacle of Islamic philosophy and which appeared as something new for human thought in general. Similar were the sciences of narration (*ar-riwayah*) and understanding of them (*ad-dirayah*).

Thus, the question should not be over the difference, since reason and text determine it. Rather, it should be over our manner when we disagree that severs ties of love and amity and brings enmity and hatred, as this violates what is decided by Islam when we claim that we are propagating it.

In my prime, the youths' politeness exceeded their knowledge and obliged them to appreciate knowledge and age. In the course of time, I saw some youths whose ignorance led them to overcome the scholars in dispute and blind argument, and some scholars concealed their knowledge for fear of the stupidity of the foolish people who respect neither knowledge nor age and think that they are something! Surely we belong to Allah, and surely to Him we are returning.

One of the characteristics of the Islamic *shari'ah* is that it is established on limits (*hadd*) and grace (*fadl*). By limits I mean that which the Qur'an describes in the verse

> ❬*These are the limits ordained by Allah, so, do not transgress them*❭
>
> (Al-Baqarah, 229)

Thus, at the end of *halal* (lawful) acts, there is a limit. If anyone transgresses it, he commits a sin. Allah has prohibited transgressing the bounds one time and drawing near them another, saying:

> ❬*These are the limits set by Allah, so approach them not*❭

(Al-Baqarah, 187)

Thus when Allah prohibited approaching them, He meant the beginning of *haram* (forbidden) acts, but when He prohibited transgressing them, He meant the expansion of *halal*. But there are degrees of grace (*fadl*) that are ranked according to differences in resolution and firmness of faith. Regarding this, Allah says:

> ❮*But whoever does good of his own accord, it is better for him.*❯
>
> (Al-Baqarah, 184)

And He also says:

> ❮*And do not forget liberality between yourselves*❯
>
> (Al-Baqarah, 237)

So, if one abides by these limits and neither transgresses nor draws near them, it is good. And if one ascends into the ranks of grace, it is better.

The same applies to duty and *ihsan* (to do more that what is required). Duty is to perform what is required, while *ihsan* is to exceed duty and do more than it.

> ❬*Indeed the pious shall be among Gardens and fountains, taking what their Lord has given them, surely they were before that doers of good, they slept not but a little of the night.*❭
>
> (Adh-Dhariyat,15-17)

Thus the obligatory prayers are the limit of duty, while the late night prayer (*Qiyam Al-Lail*) is a kind of grace and *ihsan* that exceeds what is obligatory.

*At-Taurah* (the Book revealed to Moses) prescribed absolute retaliation, and *Al-Injil* (the Book revealed to Jesus) adopted absolute forgiveness or amnesty, but the Qur'an presents both forgiveness and retaliation, while urging forgiveness. Thus retaliation is a limit (*hadd*) and forgiveness is a grace (*fadl*).

The legal rulings concerning obligation are five: *halal* (lawful), *haram* (prohibited), Sunnah (a practice of the Prophet, peace be upon him), *makruh* (disapproved), and

*mubah* (allowed). What is lawful may be *fard* or *wajib*.[3] Sunnah may be stressed or not.[4] The disapproved may be due to prohibition or to keep one from an abominable thing. It is a kind of grace to avoid the enlargement of what is allowed.

The legal objectives are three: necessities, needs, and improvements. The Qur'an has limits which comprise words, their meanings—whether single or ordered—, and truths and intricacies of words deduced by those with insight. It is reported on the authority of some Companions that a man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, "Teach me some wonders of knowledge." The Prophet replied, "What did you do in the head of knowledge?" The man asked, "What is the head of knowledge?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Did you know the Lord, exalted be He?" The man replied, "Yes." The Prophet asked, "What did you do towards His right?" The man replied, "I have done what

[3] *Fard* and *wajib* are both obligatory but vary in degree. A *fard* act is of a higher degree of obligation than a *wajib* act, and, likewise, a greater sin is incurred if it is neglected. (editor)

[4] A stressed Sunnah is an act that the Prophet (peace be upon him) performed regularly or many times. An unstressed Sunnah is an act he performed only once or a few times. (editor)

Allah wanted me." The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked, "Did you know death?" The man replied, "Yes." The Prophet asked, "What did you prepare for it?" The man replied, "I have done what Allah wanted me." The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Go and perfect these three points. Then come to learn the wonders of knowledge."[5]

These three pillars—knowing Allah, knowing the Last Day, and preparing for it—are the principal objectives of the Qur'an. All other matters are subsidiary and subordinate. These objectives, along with subsidiary matters, also differ in their status. In other words, they are not equal pertaining to the degree of knowledge, commitment, and goal. In this may be a message for a worshiping people who do not worship except for following subsidiary matters and do not go beyond them to the principal objectives and great issues!

This issue, namely, the equality of revelation, is determined and decided by the Qur'an when it says:

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[5]Reported by Ibn As-Sini, Abu Na'im, and Ibn 'Abdul-Barr. It was mentioned in *Ihya' 'Alum Ad-Din*, and also reported by Al-Hamidi in *Al-Marwid Ar-Rahmani.*

❬*Those Messengers! We preferred some to others; to some of them Allah spoke (directly); others He raised to degrees (of honour).*❭

(Al-Baqarah, 253}

Here, preference is not due to their persons, status of their families, or their lineage. Rather it is due to the disparity of what was revealed to them and the things with which they were sent. This is clearly explained by the Prophet's saying: "Every prophet had miracles by which people believed, but what I have been given is divine inspiration which Allah has revealed to me. So I hope that my followers will outnumber the followers of the other prophets on the Day of Resurrection" (Al-Bukhari).

These are principal and general proofs. There is decisive evidence on the issue of research, that is whether all the revelation is equal or not. What makes these general proofs clearer are the proofs of insight, which draw distinctions between the Verse of the Throne (Ayat Al-Kursi) and the Verse of Debt (Ayat Al-Madayanah); and between Surat Al-Ikhlas and Surat Al-Masad. Are these equal with the insight of faith, the verse which says ❬*He is Allah, there is no god but He*❭ and the verse ❬*so, eat and drink*❭? Or the verse

❬*Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah*❭ and ❬*Take your adornment*❭?

Do not say, "Yes, they are all equal because they are all revelation," for this limitation turns the claim into a proof, when, the issue accurately is, Is all that is called revelation of equal rank? If we answer, "Yes," the rule will be all that is called revelation is equal because it is revelation. And this will turn the claim, which requires a proof, into a proof in itself.

It is possible, in the issue of research, to set the following rule: all revelations that contain remembrance of Allah or lead the way to Him are superior to other revelations.

Correspondingly, there is a disparity of sins according to their nearness to polytheism, which is the greatest sin. Thus, insight admits this disparity, which is based on the nearness to the great or grievous sins, just as the disparity regarding orders or obligations is based on their nearness to the great objective of revelation, namely, knowing Allah.

If these general proofs and their support through insight are not enough for those whose minds and feelings of belief do not go beyond the mere wording of texts, then deduction is easier. So, let us be guided by the Prophet himself (peace be

upon him), who told us about the difference in rank of some parts of the Qur'an. He also gave superiority to some of the surahs and verses over others as follows:

- Sound hadiths are reported in support of preference for some surahs. These surahs are: Al-Fatihah, "Az-Zahrawan" [Al-Baqarah and Al-`Imran], Al-An`am, the seven long surahs, Al-Kahf, Yasin, Ad-Dukhan, Al-Mulk, Az-Zalzalah, An-Nasr, Al-Kafirun, Al-Ikhlas, "Al-Ma`udhatan" [Al-Falaq and An-Nas]. The other hadiths that are reported regarding other surahs are not sound.

- Regarding Surat Al-Fatihah, it is reported that it is the best and greatest of the Qur'an.

- An-Nasa'i reported that Surat Yasin is the heart of the Qur'an.

- A sound hadith states that Ayat Al-Kursi is the best verse of the Qur'an.

- Another sound hadith states that Surat Al-Ikhlas equals one third of the Qur'an.

The equating of Surat Al-Ikhlas to one third of the Qur'an is due to its subject matter, which is knowing Allah, while the

ultimate objective of the Qur'an is to know Allah, His meeting, and the way which leads to Him. Thus it becomes clear that if Surat Al-Ikhlas is recited three times, it is not a substitute for the whole Qur'an because this is neglects the remaining principal and consequent objectives, which are indispensable.

Are the pillars of Islam of equal rank? The answer comes from the Prophet (peace be upon him). The group reported on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas: When the Prophet (peace be upon him) dispatched Mu'adh bin Jabal to Yemen in the tenth year of Hijrah, he said to him, "You will meet People of the Book, so call them first to testify that there is no god but Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah. If they respond to this, tell them that Allah, Mighty and Majestic, has prescribed upon them five prayers every day and night. If they respond to this, then tell them that Allah the Exalted has prescribed charity on their property, which is taken from their rich and given to their poor. If they respond to this, then beware against the remaining parts of their property [i.e., do not take anything from their property except what is mentioned above]. And fear the supplication of the oppressed people (against you), for there is no barrier between it and Allah."

This hadith is clear proof of the disparity of the pillars of Islam. Thus, the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned the superior before commitment to the lesser ones. If all the pillars were of equal rank, he would not have mentioned them in such a clear order.

This is the method of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in *da`wah.* Thus his messages to the rulers always started with, "I call you to testify that there is no god but Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah. Profess your Islam and you will be saved."

To proceed, I think that the case has become clear. So, it is not warranted to pay attention to and spend effort on trivialities, formalities, and differences that are aspects of the easiness of Islam. The Muslim scholars agree that the difference of opinion is an aspect of mercy for the nation. Is it justified to use this difference to arrive at conflict and dissension and to abandon the great issues of Islam and Muslims when nations are collectively fighting Islam and its followers?

Now we are faced with a dangerous cultural and historical turning point that has deep effects on the future of Islam and Muslims. Decline will be our fate if we do not rise.

If we rise, we will be led to sound thought that understands this reality and gives the required priority to the great works and issues.

And if we decline, we will be led to superficial thought that is tempted by forms, appearance, and phenomena and that gives priority to minor issues and makes major issues secondary. This is the case of those who dispute the disparity of the rulings of the *shari`ah* and give priority to trivialities and superficialities. They preoccupy a group of immigrants in the Western countries, among whom is a loud-voiced one whose word carries weight while others echo like one who does not hear except a supplication and a shout.

Today, Muslims are in a crisis of existential changing while East and West are suffering from a crisis of a loss of humanity. Hope is in one Islamic nation with its Qur'anic meaning and human characteristic.

There is no doubt that Muslims are awakening today to their humiliation and weakness and the domination of the West over them. To neglect the points of decline is a kind of destructive disaster and sinful, disbelieving treason. The rise cannot be safe until the defects and danger are observed and cannot be completed if they are hidden and neglected.

Moreover, it cannot be completed if the priorities are neglected or ignored. It is a catastrophe when these crimes come from a followed loud-voiced person or his spokesman who talks so much about the so-called terrorism till they become tiring and boring.

However, we did not hear from them even a faint noise about official terrorism and its employed writers who frankly stabbed the core of Islam. Thus, Islam and Muslims are divided into knowledgeable hypocrites, ignorant followers, affiliates who are more dangerous than the enemies, enemies who direct those affiliates, and faithful Muslims who are lacking determination and ability to choose!

## (10)

## A CALL FOR POLYGAMY

*Da`wah* (calling people to Allah and His religion) is a science and art. And if one does not combine the art of *da`wah* and knowledge of its realities, his harm will be greater than his good. Moreover, his *da`wah* will be a harm for his conscience, a pleasure for his enemy, and a soldier against his religion!

Indeed, whoever is not well-acquainted with the art of *da`wah* falls into offensive truthfulness. Included in offensive truthfulness is to neglect aims for secondary matters, to put a correct thing into an improper place, to proclaim it in a time other than its own, and to display it without need. Truly, putting medicine in a place other than that of disease constitutes a new disease in itself. The leader of *da`wah* (peace be upon him) told us that faith (*iman*) is divided into branches, and these are sub-divided into higher and lower ones. Therefore, to replace the higher by the lower, or to speak with those who are ignorant about the

higher in the same way you do about the lower is to contradict the art of *da'wah*. So, if you are in a land of non-Muslims who know nothing about Islam except its name—there are some among them who do not even know the name of Islam—and you want to call them to Islam, what should you start with? Do you teach them how to perform ablution? Moreover, if you live among them and their laws prohibit taking a second wife, what should you speak about to them while they are ignorant about monotheism and the message? Do you say that Islam allows polygamy?

The issue is not to prove that ablution or polygamy is a part of Islam. Rather, the issue is from where should we start? The purpose of the axis around which orders, prohibitions, examples, and admonitions of Islam evolve is to link man, with his human nature, with Heaven so that he does not cling to the earth and cease his relations with Heaven. So, if you are among a people who have no relation with Heaven and have cut what links them with Allah, their ultimate concern is to secure food, drink, comfort, and desires. Moreover, they do not speak with man except from an earthly aspect, his animal desires, and his aggressive hopes. Then with what speech about Islam should you start with these people?

Furthermore, if you live with people who are ignorant of Islam and call, truly or falsely, for international peace and the cessation war in international relations, is it proper to call within their lands for political assassination and fighting against the whole of mankind in the name of Islam for no reason except that they are non-Muslims?

Upon this artistic violation is founded the *da'wah* of those with whom I lived in America. As to the call for a second wife, it is their duty with or without occasion, whereas the law in America does not permit polygamy. The result is that one of the wives has a registered document by which she guarantees her rights, while the other has an unregistered document and consequently loses her rights.

In America some issues of this kind were raised before me. This is done in the name of Islam and *da'wah* to it! I met a happy couple who cooperated in their life and in earning their livelihood. The husband told me he once went to perform Hajj and met there a university professor who advised him to take another wife. Upon his advice, he returned to his native city (Cairo) and married another wife, then returned to his home in New York. He told his wife about what had happened. Their relationship went bad. Out of his piety and dedication to his religion, the husband asked

me to give him a *fatwa* (legal opinion) about divorcing his first wife with a registered divorce, then remarrying her in a private (*'urfi*) marriage which is not registered. Consequently, she would be a wife without a marriage certificate but with a divorce document. By doing so, he would be able to bring his second wife to America, for the law does not allow this as long as his first wife is an official wife. They call the unregistered contract a *shar'iya* (legal) contract and the registered contract a *rasmiy* (official) contract. This is depicted as if the *shari'ah* (Islamic law) rejects registering the marriage contract by which the wife's rights are guaranteed. Moreover, the advice that their sheikh gives them considers only essence of permissibility and not the condition of those who are allowed to practice this. Nor does his advice consider the rule of law there, nor the legal wife and her liability to estrangement, nor her children. And how many problems of this kind I was told about! I also did not know anyone of their leaders who spoke about the generosity of Islam towards woman, nor about her rights before the husband, nor about required justice, nor about the duty of consorting with her with kindness, nor about anything except an absolute call for polygamy to such an extent that when one invites another for food, the last word of advice to him is, "Marry a wife, marry another wife." This

is turn loosens the woman's tongues with evil in return for his advice.

There is another kind of marriage that is called a business marriage. This is done when the immigrant is unable to acquire a Green Card (permanent residency) for some reason. He searches for a woman to marry, and she sets a condition that will not have intercourse with her. In return, she receives not less than three thousand dollars. After registering the marriage and obtaining the Green Card, he divorces her according to the condition set and registers the divorce. This contract is invalid, for the rule states: the valid contracts are those which abide by their consequences. In this contract, non-consummation is conditioned, and this contradicts the purpose of marriage. I did not hear those who importunately call for polygamy speak about this.

I will never forget an African-American woman who came to the mosque and asked me if it was unlawful when she concluded such a contract. She also sorrowfully said she had intended a service to her brother in Islam!

Did the immigrants who conspire against each other engage themselves in a remedy for such issues? Did they cooperate and unite to have a powerful word by which they can satisfy

their needs? No, unfortunately, what kills the enthusiastic out of anxiety and grief is that they are deaf to such calls. What occupies their minds is to plot to destroy and collapse the structure.

Before I traveled to America, a book printed in the Arab Peninsula, whose subject is calling on the Muslims to practice polygamy, was sent to me. Then, a person came to me complaining with great sorrow that polygamy had become a subject of research and discussions. He also expressed his fear about the creed of those who indulge in this discussion as if polygamy had become a practical creed and whoever neglects it is an unbeliever.

In Egypt, some movements that are an echo of the peninsula have also advocated this call and raised it on their pulpits.

**2.** The wonder is that the sheikh in America, in his call for "breaking woman's head," states that they were created from a rib and the most crooked part of this rib is the highest part, which is her head. He proceeds saying the treatment of her head is to break it. He cites the sound hadith which reads "Fear Allah in women, for they were created from a rib. And the most crooked part of this rib is the highest part. If you \want to straighten it, you will break it, and if you leave it, it

will remain crooked." This hadith is a call for living kindly with women and a declaration from the one that calls for this kindness.

This kindness enables the woman to perform her mission of educating and caring, which is what the woman is naturally disposed for. So, to try to change her nature is something that can never be. The good way is to accept her nature with which the Creator made her, glory be to Him. Therefore, her mission in this life will not be fulfilled without this nature, like the rib that cannot fulfill its position except by crookedness. Is it not a wonder to give such a meaning to the hadith and also for their *da'iyah* (one who calls others to Islam) and leader to take it in such a way contrary to its purpose, and this in a country where Islam is charged with prejudice against women and denial of human rights? So, what do you say about the one helps others against his religion?

Abiding by the duty of Muslims towards their religion, I was urged to clear such doubts in a lecture that was held upon a question decided by their leader. Later on, it was published in *Al-Liwa' Al-Arabi* newspaper, which is released in New York.

The text of this lecture, along some explanation, is as follows:

**Young man**: Sheikh, how many wives do you have?

**Shiekh**: Why do you probe into the affairs of others?

**Young man**: Excuse me, Shiekh, I read a book that was printed in the Arab Peninsula and was followed by another. This book claims that the essence in marriage is polygamy. So, I want to take from the life of our sheikh a proof for or against this issue, for we know that our sheikh sticks firmly to the Book and the Sunnah.

**Sheikh**: Do your companions have other issues?

**Young man**: Yes, they have many issues among which are the prohibition of photography and cologne. They also have a treatise that includes many topics such as where the praying person should place his hands when he raises himself from bowing and many others that are summed up under the title "Searching for Strange Things to Divert Thought Away from Principal Issues and Neglecting the Issues of Life".

**Sheikh**: Are the following among their issues: the duty of the ruler towards his subjects, the rights of subjects before the

ruler, honest duty towards the nation, ruling with justice, freedom of the nation, its right to hold him responsible, its right to discharge him, its right to minerals and buried treasures extracted from its lands, the issue of Islam and Muslims and their relations with the West and the East, and their issues with Israel?

**Young man**: I read a booklet to them in which they state: "Obedience to the ruler, even if he is unjust, is obligatory on us." Not only this, but they also state that this is the criterion by which you can distinguish the Muslim from the Kharijite [a member of an early schismatic group].

**Sheikh**: I seek refuge in Allah from this weakness. Where is the duty of preventing the unjust from continuing injustice and of supporting the oppressed?

**Young man**: They have no saying except what pleases the adults, amuses the children, diverts the thought, ignites the dispute and enlarges the dissension.

**Sheikh**: You answered what you have asked. However, let me ask you, who was the first wife of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)?

**Young man**: Khadijah.

**Sheikh**: Did he take another wife besides her?

**Young man**: No, neither before nor after prophethood.

**Sheikh**: What about the rest of his wives, did he marry anyone of them to prove that polygamy is the essence?

**Young man**: What we learned and what is proved by reality is that his marriages were due to religious, political, or social reasons. Moreover, the biography of the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not mention that he married anyone to prove the issue of polygamy.

**Sheikh**: Did you ever read a saying of his that orders, guides, denotes, or even insinuates that polygamy is the essence?

**Young man**: I never read or knew any.

**Sheikh**: Did you ever read or relate a text that reproaches the person who limits himself one wife?

**Young man**: I never knew or related any.

**Sheikh**: Is the woman allowed by the *shari`ah* to place a condition in her marriage contract which prevents her husband from becoming polygamous?

**Young man**: You scholars told us such a thing.

**Sheikh**: Have you also been taught that if the woman is a member of a family that rejects polygamy, this custom would be equal to a condition?[1]

**Young man**: The rule that states that custom is equal to condition is well known.

**Sheikh**: How do you allow a condition that contradicts the essence? If the *fiqh* (jurisprudence) allows a condition, and if the custom is also accepted as a condition, it is impossible that a condition may be a doctrine or that custom may contradict the essence. Otherwise, it is an invalid condition such as everything that violates the essence.

The sheikh proceeded further in his explanation for his pupil through dialogue.

**Sheikh**: How many wives for Adam did the Qur'an speak of?

**Young man**: It spoke of one because there wasn't any other.

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[1] *Tafsir Al-Manar*, vol. 9, p. 536, taken from Imam Ibn Taimiyah.

**Sheikh**: How many did the Qur'an speak of for Noah, Lot, and Moses?

**Young man** (surprised): One, yes, one!

**Sheikh**: And when did Abraham, the leader of the prophets, amuse himself with Coptic Hajar, and for what?

**Young man**: Hajar was a slave girl for the tyrant who lived in `Ain Al-Jar, which was known by the name of Al-Biqa` (to which Al-Biqa` the commentator belongs), near Ba`labak. This tyrant gave her as a gift to Sarah, and she granted her to Abraham hoping that she might bear a child for him.

**Sheikh**: Do you know that Abraham took another wife besides Sarah in her lifetime? So, learn what Imam An-Nawawi mentioned in his book *Tahdhib Al-Asma' wa As-Sifat*. He said that when Sarah the mother of Isaac died, Abraham married a Canaanite woman who was called Qanturah. In the hadith, it was related "Turks are the sons of Banu Qanturah." This is the leader of the prophets, about whom Allah revealed

> ❴*Follow the Religion of Abraham, a man of pure faith who was never of the polytheists*❵
>
> (An-Nahl, 123)

Consequently, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) married more than one wife for the previously mentioned reasons, and when Allah ordered him to give them a choice between Allah, His Messenger, and the Hereafter and worldly life and its adornment, and they, of course, chose Allah, His Messenger, and the Hereafter, in turn, Allah prohibited him to take another wife or exchange them. This was a reward for the wives of the Prophet for their good manner. It was also a favor from the Prophet to shun new marriages.

**Sheikh**: O my son! This is the way of the prophets, from Adam, the first of the prophets; to Noah, the first of the messengers; to Abraham, the leader of the prophets; to Muhammad, the seal of the Prophets. So, from where has it come that polygamy is the essence?

**Young man**: What a subtle deduction and how obscure to those who do not contemplate the Qur'an! But permit me to ask an additional question out of explanation, not opposition. Didn't Allah say

❴*then marry women of your liking, two, three, four*❵
(An-Nisa', 3)

**Sheikh**: O my son! Don't be like the poet who said

Your Lord did not say "Woe!" to those who are drunk
But said, "Woe!" to the ones who pray!

First, my son, the command in Allah's saying "then marry" signifies permissibility, and there is no dispute that polygamy is permitted with conditions. So, permissibility is not our issue. It is rather, lest we forget, which of them is the essence, monogamy or polygamy?

Second, why did you not mention the beginning of the verse, in which Allah says,

❴*And if worry that you will not be fair to the orphans, then marry women of your liking, two, three, four*❵
(An-Nisa', 3)

Then, there is a reason behind the permissibility and what comes as a contradiction to the root.

Third, at the end of the verse, Allah says,

❴*but if you worry that you will not be equitable (between them) then (marry) only one*❵
(An-Nisa', 3)

This is also guidance for them to avoid injustice and a large number of children. As Imam Ash-Shafi`i explained, if they marry more than one wife, then fear of injustice or a large

number of children is deemed a reason that revokes the permissibility.

Fourth, add to this the guidance to avoid injustice:

> ❮*that is nearer to fairness, lest you deviate from the right path*❯
>
> (An-Nisa', 3)

This is a divine analysis of man's eternal inability to observe justice between his wives. Therefore, guidance here is to leave the permissible thing and consider this as the essence in marriage as long as the essence is man's inability to observe justice.

Limiting oneself to only one is nearer to justice, and justice is nearer to piety. Limiting oneself to one wife is the essence, and if this essence is opposed by anything such as seeking children, as done by the leader of the Prophets, then permissibility is maintained. The conditional permissibility cannot be the essence nor does it invalidate the essence.

The contingent permission does not include the invalid objection, When the sole wife has her menstrual period, what can the man do? This argument depicts the Muslim as a lecher who has no resourcefulness. To those we say: Allah the Almighty made polygamy as a guidance to avoid

injustice to the orphans, and you made it lechery and lust, and then you claim that you follow the Book and Sunnah. Where in them is this animal claim found?

In his book *Al-Itamatu wa Al-Mu'anash,* Abu Halan At-Tawhidi mentioned that there are certain male animals that avoid the female during her pregnancy, and there are also some that absolutely limit themselves to one mate and do not have multiple mates.

Do you view the Muslim on a lower rank than these animals? And in your absurd claim, you neglect a legal ruling that allows the husband every kind of enjoyment with his menstruating wife except this specific intercourse until she is pure, a permissible enjoyment in a place other than that of intercourse.

Is that not enough for the Muslim, in your opinion, and is it this Islam that you introduce to non-Muslims? And after that you, out of wittiness, ask what does a man do if his four wives menstruate at one time? And it is a possible situation. Do you guide him to a fifth wife? Or to a wife who does not menstruate? Or to what?

Truly, it is prattle for our men to keep them away from serious and great affairs.

## (11)

## *RIBAA* AND OTHER MATTERS

**1.** There are several axioms, or what should be taken as such, to be presented as a prelude to *ribaa*[1] and the interest that is given on loans and deposits which will help clarify the issues of this thesis. These axioms are necessary for appropriate conclusions.

### A. What is this *ribaa* which is prohibited by Islam?

It is the increase on capital. It is an increase estimated as a ratio related to the original capital in exchange for the

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[1] *Ribaa*, from the root meaning to "increase, grow", is often translated as "usury", which is not correct because the modern meaning of usury is excessive interest. Also, there are some forms of *ribaa* that are not included in usury, even in its original meaning of any interest or increase. Modern Arabic often uses *fa'idah*, from the root meaning "to benefit", for bank interest, apparently in an attempt to hide its true nature. We have here retained the Arabic word *ribaa* and translated *fa'idah* as "interest". (editor)

duration of the loan or the deposit, or else it is determined otherwise as a certain percentage.

Here are elements that are part and parcel of the definition: money, borrowed or deposited, whether or not the lender or depository asked the other to borrow or deposit; the duration of the loan; and the increase agreed upon in exchange for the money to stay for this period of time, whether this agreement was mentioned at the time of borrowing or was announced in mass media, and whether or not the borrower or depositor worked with this money. This increase would be fixed, for example, calculated as 20% per annum.

**B. Is the increase attributed to profit a kind of *ribaa*?**

This means the agreement of both the giver and the taker of the money—the latter being a real person or a moral entity that will work with the money, whether individually or with another—and provided that this business is legal (this does not include lending it again to another, whether a bank or an individual, at a higher rate of interest) to give the borrower at the time the profit is returned a certain percentage of profit, such as five percent, not calculated as a ratio of the original paid capital. Is this increase considered a sort of *ribaa*?

By referring to the definition and its elements, it turns out that this increase is not to be considered as a kind of *ribaa*. It is not calculated against a certain period of time, and it is not related to the capital or assigned a fixed interest rate at the time the money is returned regardless of whether a profit is achieved or not. And it is understood as a condition to this that if there is no profit, there is no increase to the giver.

Thus, it shows that stipulating the increase at the time money is given, calculating it on the given money, and assigning it to a certain period of time is not an increase from profit. It is *ribaa*, even if a profit is made. This does not include specifying a certain percentage of profit in advance. The former is *ribaa* because there is a prefixed condition to pay an increase even if there is no profit made. Saying that profit is sure to be made based on feasibility studies is not acceptable.

**C. What is money?**

Books on economics are full of definitions of money, explanations and theories that try to understand the realty of money and its description. We do not mean here to make a survey of these definitions and theories associated with them, but we intend to specify what is called money in modern

transactions. The term "money" in its old context referred to two kinds of cash: gold and silver. Is the meaning of money still fixed to these two kinds of cash?

If we consider commercial dealings today—and they are considered to be the most important and the broadest operations of money exchange and transfer—we find the components of the payment stage are represented in the creditor, i.e., the seller, who receives from the purchaser a means of payment. Thus, he will be releasing the debtor from the debt. What are the contemporary means of payment? Are they limited to the two kinds of cash money?

We do not see that now. It does not occur to the mind of the seller (the creditor) or the purchaser (the debtor) to consider either of the two kinds of cash. Instead of them, we see bank notes. We even find in the modern economy the importance of the bank note diminished and replaced by various methods of payment acceptable for circulation such as the check, the bill of exchange, money transfers, credit cards, and other payment obligations. All these must be viewed as money from the economic and monetary points of view, for if we consider the function performed by these means in the economic cycle, we find that we can pay through them all transactions and debts. Then, this is money. So metallic

money is the remainder of the monetary system that preceded modern money, but in the monetary development they are almost the same things. That is because metallic money no longer represents the full value in exchange for transactions. If the purchaser delivers a coin whose value amounts to one hundred in exchange for a commodity of an equal value, the coin today, as a matter of fact, does not represent the value of the one hundred inscribed on it. There still remains the right to demand the increase existing on the value of the metal. It is thus that the metallic coin and the paper note have combined, both making the same demand from the state, the banks, or individuals.[2]

**D. Is interest beneficial?**

Some people claim that economic prosperity is based solely on interest. Consequently, banks are deemed to be the nerve center of the modern economy. Among Muslim researchers, in particular, there are some that adhere to this principle. They consider interest to be beneficial to the capital holders banks in general. Thus, according to them, it is no longer part of the context of prohibited *ribaa*, which, to their minds, has

[2]Freiherr von Bettmann. Translated from the German as *Karithat Al-Fa'idah (The Disaster of Interest)* by Dr. Ahmad `Abdul `Aziz An-Najjar, chap. 3, p. 34.

only one from, that of the lender taking advantage of the debtor.

**E. Is this adaptation correct?**

I do not want to provide an answer of my own or that of religious scholars, but I shall take the statement from economists so that it may gain credit. In the previously mentioned reference, *The Disaster of Interest*, which was written by a leading German economist and banker from Frankfort, the author states that an increase in interest devalues money and that every time the interest rate rises the value of money deteriorates in the same way that adding water to orange juice or milk lowers its quality. Interest leads to the deterioration of money. We are not speaking here merely figuratively; rather, this simple statement is a valid and sound equation. Actually, interest destroys the value of money and will absolutely ruin any monetary system. The rate and volume of ruin will be based on the amount and duration of interest. The interest rate is considered high if it goes beyond the rate of production. The production rate in industrial countries does not go beyond 40% per annum, while the interest rate goes beyond this by more than 10% in some countries. This is what is actually taking place in America as far as the dollar is concerned.

When the translator, Dr. Ahmad `Abdul `Aziz, and his son Dr. Khalid traveled and met the German author, Dr. Najjar tried to convince the author that what he concluded in his book had already been concluded by Islamic banks. He said agitatedly, "I'm not attached to any religion whatsoever, and I do not adopt any particular religious point of view, but I'm speaking of economic facts based on experimentation or induction, and it is not a quotation borrowed from anyone."

Our late professor Dr. Muhammad `Abdullah Al-`Arabi told us that while he was in Paris a book was published explaining the disaster of interest and the ruin caused by the banks to the economies of countries and individuals. Soon the book was out of print, and it was not easy to find a copy of it. He was fortunate enough to find one. It was a reference he relied on for the lectures he delivered to us Islamic economics.

After the Egyptian Institute of *Fatwas* delivered a judgment making investment certificate returns *halal* (lawful) and limiting *ribaa* to whatever involves an exploitation of the needy, the economist Dr. `Ali Lutfi, former prime minister of Egypt, wrote a leading article in *Al-Ahram* daily on 6 July 1991. In it he emphasized that banks are being unfair to the depositors, that banking transactions are not based on mutual

consent, and that banks practice a kind of fraud and delusion. And he said the pyramid was turned upside down, for the exorbitant and enormous interest rates conflict with various international banking traditions and customs. Banks give a rate of interest of 17.5% to deposits and they lend at an interest of 22%. The banks' share is 4.5% and may go to 9.3%. This is robbery and extreme injustice to depositors. The central bank gave banks a free hand, and banks took advantage of it to impose their terms on depositors and borrowers.

**F. Is money a commodity?**

The Western economic theory of interest is based on money, i.e., cash, being a commodity. Thus, if a factory' land is a commodity with a revenue, and the machines and the laborers' work are also commodities, then capital is a commodity that must have a return as well. If it were not for money, all these commodities would not bring about their revenue.

The Islamic concept does not give cash money this connotation. Rather, it views it as an assessor that assesses things. It is said that this laborer's work is worth such-and-such an amount of money. Cash shows the value of work and

things, so if we make money a commodity we deny its reality. If we negate the truth of a thing, it will be impossible for it to remain as it was. Then we will be in need of another assessor, so what will it be? This is confusing and contradictory. Then we will be turning the assessor into something assessed. We will have erased its truth. This is a transgression, contradiction, and talking in circles, so we would ask, "What is the value of this assessed thing?" And this ruin and contradiction will all disappear by making capital a business partner which will be profiting if it profits and losing if it loses. This is the Islamic system. With it the assessor remains as it is, the assessed remains as it is, and things keep their own reality.

### G. Are all banking transactions some sort of *ribaa*?

This is how the sheikh judged things to be in America in my hearing. He argued against all banking staff and urged the public to decry them. In the lecture in which he declared this *fatwa* (opinion), I was asked to deliver a speech. I rose and spoke politely and with dignity and in a roundabout manner until I came to the conclusion that some banking transactions are allowed. This includes the check, which is an order from the customer to the bank to pay to a third person the amount written on the check from his current account in the bank.

This is a sort of behavior that is free of *ribaa*, along with other transactions such as the Letter of Credit. The Arabs in the past knew something akin to this transaction, which was known as *as-suftajah* and was a letter from the capital owner to his agent to pay some money to another. He would thus guard himself against the risks of the road. Al-Jahidh mentioned this in his treatise, *Hujaj An-Nubuwa*. It is also explained in the Arabic dictionaries *Al-Qamus* and *Al-Musbah Al-Munir*.

This is an actual example of their way of giving a *fatwa* not based on knowledge.

### H. Are credit cards *halal*?

In America, there is a kind of transaction that I did not know of before, which is known as the credit card. This card assures the stores that the depositor deals with that the bank will settle the account later as a deduction from the depositor's account. The depositor who is carrying a credit card has signed to the bank confirming his readiness to pay a compound or simple interest when his payment to the bank is delayed.

It is a recognized fact that Islam has damned anyone dealing with *ribaa*, whether he is the man who earns his living from

this practice, a giver, an agent, a clerk, or any witness to the transaction. It is surprising that they have kept silent about this *haram* (prohibited) deal quite unnecessarily. They really marveled at my drawing their attention to its being *haram*. One of them said, "You are the first one to approach this issue and show us its judgment."

**I. How do other religions view *ribaa*?**

During various attempts to attack Islam, prejudiced bigots claimed that Islam is the cause for Muslims' backwardness. Islam's prohibition of *ribaa* was greatly responsible for this allegation. They said that one of the most important reasons for Muslims' backwardness in the modern age with its unprecedented economic progress was Islam's prohibition of interest which made Muslims poor and rendered them economically more backward than the West. It is obvious that this allegation was influenced by the Western way of life, which abandoned religion in favor of this world.

In this attitude the West has overlooked its Book (Scripture), which prohibited profit from a loan. This is according to Exodus 22:25, Leviticus 25:36-37 in the Old Testament and Luke 6:34-35 in the New Testament.

The Westerners' departure from their Book was due to three causes that were not present in Islam and among Muslims:

- First, their lack of respect for the sayings of their men of religion after they revealed their state of affairs by practicing what they used to preach their people to avoid, namely, seeking profit in trade.

- Second, the flourishing of the Industrial Revolution and the emergence of huge industries and the goods which they exported to the backward countries at exorbitant prices and high interest, the incrimination of which they saw would be doing these countries a considerable service.

- Third, the abuse of these debts and their interest by the West as a colonial means to control these countries as they did to Egypt, West Africa, and Turkey before them.

The history of interest does not extend back much beyond the mid-nineteenth century. The first law to be issued in this respect was in 1817. The Church chose not to get involved. Maybe it found an excuse in Deuteronomy 23:19-20: "You shall not charge interest on loans to another Israelite, interest on money, interest on provisions, interest on anything that is lent. On loans to a foreigner you may charge interest, but on

loans to another Israelite you may not charge interest..." (New Revised Standard Version)[3]

The Qur'an reprimanded them for this attitude:

> ❴*Because of the sinfulness of the Jews, We have forbidden to them certain good things that were permitted to them, and for their hindering many from Allah's Way, and for their taking usury, though they were forbidden, and that they devoured people's wealth in falsehood...*❵
>
> (An-Nisa', 160-161)

If the West allowed interest under the glow of industrial progress and political victory, Muslims since the late nineteenth century, under the impact of economic and political defeats, began to suffer psychological and intellectual defeat. Many Muslims tried to bridge the gap between the facts of Islam and the civilization of the victorious West, once by compromise and another time by forgery, by twisting some of the facts of Islam or by

[3]Earlier translations of the Bible used the word "usury", as still do some translations of the Qur'an. The earlier meaning of usury was any increase or interest. About 250 years ago, the time of the Industrial Revolution, the word began to take on its modern meaning of

interpreting them arbitrarily. The issue of prohibiting *ribaa* had an abundant share of twisting and fabrication, for once they said, "What is forbidden is the many-fold interest" and another time they said, "What is forbidden is to take advantage of the needy."

> ❬... *and all that was their falsehood and what they used to invent.*❭
>
> (Al-Ahqaf, 28)

**J. What about necessity?**

One of the rules of *usul al-fiqh* (the principles of Islamic jurisprudence) is: Necessity licenses forbidden practices without transgression by seeking the prohibited while the lawful is available and without going beyond just warding off what is harmful.

Another rule is: Need takes the rank of necessity, whether it is public or private. That is why forward buying [paying in advance for something that does not actually exist at the time of paying] is permissible to ward off the need of the insolvent. A man in need may borrow at interest. This is only part of what a contract may stipulate, along with acting upon

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excessive or uncustomarily high interest. See the *Oxford English Dictionary.* (editor)

something unknown or non-existent, but this is stipulated by the need of people.

The ramifications of this rule govern many transaction contracts, as well as the kinds of companies that are set up among people and whose trade is required.

If there is a correct proof and complete induction that a certain type of contract or behavior has become necessary to people such that they would feel awkward or distressed if it were prohibited, part of the prohibition should be lifted until embarrassment or stress disappears. You allow them as much as needed to lift the embarrassment, even if it was prohibited out of suspicion of being *ribaa*. This is based on the fact that needs allow the prohibited just as necessities do, and are estimated—as necessities—at the same rate. The obligations of *shari`ah* are very much tied to achieving welfare and warding off harm. Based on these objectives, scholars stipulated rules that basically originated from their own objectives. Thus, if a demand of *shari`ah* contradicts with a real benefit, it is allowed to abandon that demand within the limits of warding off harm.

At-Tufi, a Hanbali scholar, went so far as to consider welfare a *shari`ah*-based guide in worldly affairs and in transactions,

and he gave them precedence over what contradicts them in religious texts whenever it is not possible to combine them.

The words of Sheikh Rashid Rida in his interpretations give the impression that he supports At-Tufi's opinions. Many contemporary researchers used At-Tufi's opinions to amend all modern transactions until they almost suspended all (religious) texts on transactions. I have an important remark on At-Tufi's opinion: he is Shiite. I mean neither to praise nor to belittle, but Shiites hold the texts of their imams sacred or almost so. Maybe in giving precedence to welfare over the texts he meant the texts of his imams. If it is not certain, it is possible. Thus his opinion should not be used, bearing in mind that none of the imams went as far as he said.[4]

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[4]Refer to *Al-Ashbah wa An-Nadha'ir* by Ibn Najim, pp. 91-92; *Usul Al-Fiqh* by Sheikh `Abdul Wahab Khalaf, p. 210; *Usul Al-Fiqh* by Sheikh Muhammad Abu Zahrah, *Mabahith Maqasad Al-Ahkam*, p. 341; *Fiqh Al-Kitab wa As-Sunnah: Al-Biu`* by Prof. Dr. Muhammad Yusuf Musa, p. 138; *Fiqh As-Sunnah* by Sheikh Said Sabiq, vol. 3, p. 151. *Al-Qada' fi Al-Islam* by Mustashar Mahmud Ash-Shirbiny, p. 47; *Ghiyath Al-Umam* by Imam Al-Haramain Al-Juwaini, p. 202 (*Rafa` Al-Laman fi Tahdhib Ghiyath Al-Umam*); *Tafsir Al-Manar*, vol. 5, p. 212, vol. 7, p. 194; *Al-Itqan fi `Ulum Al-Qur'an* vol. 2, p. 135; *Al-Usul Al-`Amah lil Fiqh Al-Muqaram* by Muhammad Tuqi Al-Hakim, p. 381; all sources of *usul al-fiqh* under the subject *al-masaleh*.

**2.** Upon these bases we shall find clear answers to some of the Muslims' problems in America and other Western countries. Some of these problems came to me as an inquiry from the Netherlands about their judgments.

Among these are their real need to borrow from banks. There, they are in a country that does not recognize human brotherhood or Islamic solidarity. They see no excuse for a poor man, and their transactions are based upon the exchange of benefits and the rule of interest. Amidst these rules a Muslim may find himself forced to borrow. How would he be judged? Here come to the rescue some of the rules of Islamic jurisprudence. If a Muslim's immigration was motivated by necessity or need and he cannot help borrowing at interest in his new home, if real need and not an imaginary one pushed him to it—they often fancy there is a need for a quick path to luxury—he is allowed to borrow within the limits of warding off unbearable harm.

Among the applications of this rule is the housing rent issue. It is very expensive over there. There is no hope that the immigrant can save enough money to buy a house. If he sticks to rented housing, sooner or later it will be too crowded for him and his offspring. The only way out is to buy a house. The bank over there purchases the house from

the owner (the seller) and delivers it to the immigrant (the third party) and lends money at a higher rate of interest than which it pays to the seller. The installments paid by the third party will usually be less than what he used to pay as rent. Thus he will be saving the difference between the installment and the rent, and the house will pass to him.

Bear in mind what Abu Hanifah's School of jurisprudence and Muhammad stated, that *ribaa* occurs when the two parties are inviolable. If one of the two parties is not inviolable, then *ribaa* does not occur.[5]

**3.** Do you know why I filled the margins with many references? Because there, when I decided the question of *ribaa*, a "sheikh"[6] by age and not by knowledge, with a thick disheveled beard, attacked me. He considers the beard the measure of knowledge and of the scholar. His culture and profession are his hammer and file. He hovers around the Sheikh and follows his example in disseminating the seeds of animosity and separation and showing ingratitude towards

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[5]Refer to *Bada'i` As-Sana'i`*, vol. 5, p. 192, and the footnotes of Ibn `Abdin, part 7.

[6]The author is playing on the word "sheikh", which means both old man and scholar. (editor)

the homeland where he was brought up. This "sheikh" by age said in secret, while denying it in public, that so-and-so had made *ribaa halal*! It was none other than himself who showed me the article in the immigrant magazine to answer and I did.

This is yet another incident that shows their morals and their relations one another and the impact on their Islam. There were a lot of other incidents before it! Am I to blame for my criticism? Or was I supposed to keep quiet?

I know that by writing these articles about them I was swimming against a violent current that displayed itself here, there, and everywhere. But what can I do when I was charged as a Muslim with the responsibility of speaking the truth, and I was charged as a literate Muslim with the responsibility of revealing, not hiding, it?

This *fatwa* was declared according to the circumstances and as a way out. Had they established Islamic solidarity among themselves and commonly invested their few savings, had they only done just that, they would have suffered neither a need nor a necessity. How I reiterated this idea over and over again with many of them.

They expressed their satisfaction with the idea and with similar ones that solved their problems in their new land of immigration. But their disintegration and the way they acted maliciously with each other, the restriction of their Sheikh's calls there to political assassination, breaking the woman's head, polygamy—in a low, abusive style. This attitude is what obstructs their unity and cooperation in performing acts of charity and piety and avoiding whatever gives a sense of guilt and transgression.

Is this the outlook of Egyptians in America in particular? I read there the book *At-Tazwir Al-Muqaddas* (*Holy Forgery*) by sheikh `Abdul Wadud Shalabi about his journey to Australia and the Muslims' state of affairs over there. Surprisingly, it is as if he is describing what I encountered in America! I also read there in *Al-Ahram International* an article by the Egyptian Minister of the People's Assembly Affairs, Dr. Ahmad Salamah on 14 October 1992, immediately after his return from France, that the relations of most Egyptians over there are not going satisfactorily. Many people were just as confused as i was in interpreting this phenomenon, particularly as we see their interests are conflicting.

I said, this is the way I saw them in America, Libya, The Emirates, and Allah spoke truly:

> ❴*Is this a legacy they have passed from one to another? But they are an insolent people. So turn away from them; for you are not to blame. And go on admonishing, surely admonishment is beneficial to the believers.*❵
>
> (At-Tur, 53-55)

**4.** Among their issues of need or necessity in America—and I have received similar questions from Europe—is their need to work in shops which sell alcoholic drinks or pork, and the answer is the same. If the immigrant needs the job and he cannot help working there, then it is a need or a necessity which permits him to work, but he should consistently keep looking for another job that has no suspicion of *haram* in it.

**5.** Another of their issues is that some of the warm clothes are made of pigskin.

Scholars have seven different opinions on dead skin. First, tanning does not purify anything of dead skins. Second, tanning purifies the skin of edible animals and nothing else. Third, it purifies all dead skin except that of a dog, a pig, or anything made of either of them. Fourth, it purifies

everything except pigskin. Fifth, it purifies everything including the skin of the dog and pig. However, it purifies its exterior but not its interior, so it is used in dry, not moist, environments, and one prays on it and not in it. Sixth, tanning purifies all dead skins, including that of the dog and pig, both externally and internally. Seventh, dead skins can be utilized without tanning. They may be used in both dry and moist environments.

Thus different schools of *fiqh* may accommodate wearing a jacket made of pigskin and a toothbrush made of its bristles.

**6.** The Islamic Center of Southern California published a treatise, *Contemporary Economic Issues* by Mahmoud Abu As-Sa`ud and introduced by Dr. Mahir Hathout.[7]

This treatise examines some economic issues that a Muslim immigrant encounters in America that were not present in his homeland or which the American who converts to Islam now faces. The author is a doctor of modern economics. His outlook is a direct vision of the actuality in which he lives. If he is not a *shari`ah* scholar, at least his vision is necessary for such a scholar to know the facts there, over which he has

[7]Published by Zakah and Research Foundation, 7775 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45425.

no control and which he must scrutinize so that his *fatwa* will be valid.

However, the doctor is not remote from Islamic studies, *shari`ah*, principles of jurisprudence, as he is a well-known researcher and a brilliant analyst. In his treatise, he was keen to provide the reader with some fundamentals and references that give even more detailed information and clarify his views.

The writer establishes that interest is the fruit of the Western economic system and illustrates the function of money. He further establishes that is we—and the West with us—put the Islamic *shari`ah* system into practice, none will need the interest system. If Muslims adopt the interest system within the Islamic economic system, we will be joining two extremes, and our adopting Western systems will make us unable to abolish interest and will make us believe that this abolishment is impossible.

The writer opts to consider money in the Islamic system as a measure of value. It is not a commodity that can be assessed. So if he lends money to someone else, he has no right to increase it in return for this lending, as he did not work with it. The *shari`ah* rule says: There is no reward without work, and there is no work without reward. If the borrower invests the money, the lender may participate in the work with his

capital, and he will have his share of profit or loss, as the *shari`ah* rule is: The gain with the loss.

According to the capitalistic Western system, money has an implicit usurious aim, as its owner has the right to keep it and prevent its circulation without suffering any loss from this saving. This meaning is the opposite of what Islamic law stipulates, as it prohibits keeping money from circulation and preaches against any hoarding of it. It also imposes on it the law of depreciation that applies to all creatures as well as goods. This is the philosophy of *zakah* in its essence. But can a Muslim live in this Islamic philosophy in non-Muslim countries? The decisive answer is no, so what if he buys necessary or needed products and the bank pays for him according to its conditions?

In the context of his ideas on *ribaa* and interest, the author mentions the thoughts of Imam Ibn Jarir At-Tabari in his book *Ikhtilaf Al-Faqha'* and what Imam Abu Hanifah decided: that if a Muslim enters a house of war, i.e., a land inhabited by non-Muslims, and is governed by other than Islamic Law, there is no objection if he sells them a dirham for two dirhams, of if he sells them swine flesh, dead animals, or alcohol, and sells them in *ribaa*, silver for gold,

gold for gold, and every forbidden thing, exchanging the one for the two, a hand for a hand, and on credit.[8]

However, no one accused him of being a disbeliever and no scholars claimed that the imam had made lawful what Allah had prohibited, or that he had transgressed.

The writer sees that it is arbitrary to have some mufti dress every modern transaction in old garb to give the modern issue an ancient flavor while we ought to consider a modern transaction in a modern context, then in the light of the two main sources: the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

The writer in his application of some general rules decides that the Muslim who lives in the U.S.A. feels an urgent need to own a house to live in. This is either because to purchase such a house is more convenient economically than to rent, or because a spacious house that accommodates a big family is not available for rent. If it is, a family man will find it too expensive to rent.

In some cases an individual resorts to buying real estate to lighten the tax load on his income or because he considers

[8]Abi Ja`far Ibn Jarir At-Tabari, *Ikhtilaf Al-Faqha'*, pp. 58-59 (Beirut). Also *Bada'i` As-Sana'i`*, vol. 5, p. 192, and the footnotes of Ibn

real estate a place in which to invest his surplus income. Americans, generally speaking, prefer to borrow from a financial institute to finance what they buy because the interest paid by the borrower on his loan will be deducted from his taxable income.

Moreover, the installment that he pays to the lender will usually be less than the rent on similar property. An American non-Muslim sees nothing embarrassing in paying interest on his real estate loan.

The question is, Is it permissible for a Muslim residing in the United States to make such real estate deals? He said, "We consider such a transaction to be *halal*."

**7.** The point of view of this doctor, who is an expert on Muslims' circumstances in America, the state of affairs there, and Islamic economics, is—praise be to Allah—the same opinion that I gave in a *fatwa* even before I was acquainted with his research, which was presented to me there by a Muslim immigrant who had been living in America for over thirty years.[9]

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`Abdin, part 7.

[9]He is brother Hajj Fathi Hegazi, a native of Alexandria, Egypt.

This shows that the "sheikh" by age and beard who slandered me that I had made *ribaa halal* would thus be making one who does not know a judge over those who know. And it shows that a sheikh by learning who gives a *fatwa* that all banking transactions are *ribaa* was giving a *fatwa* without being familiar with the facts. It is an excuse that would make the mufti wrong.

But the real disaster over there is the followers rushing and reiterating what they hear from a sheikh and attributed to the scholars without any further research and study of that new world in which they live. Their catastrophe in their religion over there lies between a bearded scholar and an unscrutinized scholar!

**8.** Set against this absolute prohibition is the absolute negation of the existence of *ribaa* in financial papers. This is what I discussed with the author of two articles in the magazine *Al-Muhajir Al-Arabi* (*Arab Immigrant*), published in the February and April 1993 issues. Here is the February article.[10]

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[10]Published in New York by Springair Co., 9303 Shore Road, Brooklyn, NY 11209.

"Is bank interest included in the prohibited *ribaa*?" Under this title, *Al-Muhajir Al-Arabi* published an article by Dr. Gamal Morsi Badr in the last issue. In this he investigated the financial transaction of circulated banknote instead of gold and silver. He came to the conclusion that *ribaa* does not apply to banknote, that the increase in its number is not *ribaa*. The first thing that draws the attention of specialized reader is a number of contradictions in the thesis including the following:

**a.** The contradiction between the introduction and the subject matter of the thesis. The introduction says, "what Muslim immigrants face in these countries" while the subject is a free study applied to "these countries and others of the Muslim countries."

**b.** Part of this contradiction is in the researcher unilaterally judging the increase on the amount of borrowed or deposited banknote to be legal, while adding, "*Shari`ah*, history, and economics scholars should take a common stand."

**c.** Also, in his thesis and judgment, the researcher confuses between two different kinds of *ribaa*: *ribaa al-fadl* (*ribaa* of sales) and *ribaa an-nasa* (*ribaa* of deferment).

*Ribaa al-fadl* was included in types mentioned by the hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him): gold and silver, grain and barley, dry dates and salt. And its judgment: exchange providing that there is similarity and immediate payment. The researcher claims that scholars unanimously agreed that these amounts of money that are to be weighed or measured are *haram* (forbidden) based on the fact that they are weighed. However, as long as bank notes are not to be weighed, the increase is allowed.

I say the introduction on which he built the conclusion is not to be accepted, nor is it unanimously agreed upon. But the reason most scholars prohibit its increase is because of its being a value like gold and silver, or its being like the other things (foods). If these bank notes have become the value upon which stand all financial transactions, to drop the judgment on *ribaa* involved with it is to drop the most important financial source today. This leads to dropping the *zakah far'ida* included in it, which leads to dropping the obilgation of *zakah.* Thus the largest and most elaborate source by *zakah,* will be dropped. In item (1) paragraph (c) we are given a definition of money by the German economist. According to customs and traditions, people began to accept bank note in their transactions, to settle their debts, and to judge by its possession and assessment how

rich or poor a man is and the tax due from him. Is it reasonable (when the doctor is judging by reason) to drop all these transactions which the researcher sees to be reasonably accepted?

Then the origin of these bank notes is that they were considered to be receipts to the credit of the state in exchange for gold. These receipts are dealt with as money.

**d.** There is an objective contrast in the idea of the thesis, apart from the contradiction in the development of it parts. This is in the researcher's conclusion that there is no *ribaa* in a loan or deposit of bank notes. Here is what a loan in accordance with *shari`ah* is: It is the money which the lender lends to the borrower to return the same to him when he is able. A loan is a pious deed by which the money owner seeks to gain favor with Allah. It is part of the Islamic social and financial system that strengthens social bonds. It is part of the demands of a brotherhood of faith required by Islam. According to the researcher, once we have allowed to him the legal interest, it leaves its context and its truth is erased. It is no longer the loan in accordance with *shari`ah* that it once was. It becomes giving money provided that it is returned with an increase against a period of time between the receipt and repayment of the loan. As for the loan in

accordance with *shari`ah*, it is a voluntary contribution on which a period of return may not be fixed, according to most scholars. Imam Malik speaks of the possibility of stipulating a certain period of time and stipulating the condition. The majority of scholars observe the spirit of *shari`ah* and its wisdom in loans. One borrows only if he is in need, so to stipulate a certain period of time may be intolerable to him. Therefore, it was mentioned in Sunnah that the reward of lending is greater than that of charity.

The valid judicial rule says that every loan that brings benefits to the lender is *ribaa*. This increase contradicts the reality of the loan and its real purpose, which is to act gently towards people to ease their hardships. A thing does not accept its contrary. Therefore, the loan cannot be concluded while stipulating an increase on the money lent. A borrower may only return the money lent, the same or something like it.

As for the deposit, it is something left by its owner with someone else to take care of it and is allowed by *shari`*ah. It is practiced out of Islamic social cooperation. The deposit is to be kept safely until its owner demands it at any time. The man who is entrusted with it cannot dispose of it, for instance

by trading it. If he did it would change from a deposit and its laws to a loan or brokerage and its laws.

Then where are these loans and deposits based on Islamic *shari`ah* and what is going on in the banks?

As for *ribaa an-nasa* (*ribaa* of deferment), it is giving money for a certain period of time with an increase imposed as a condition. Its ruling and wisdom are understandable to all reasonable people and to many Muslim and non-Muslim economists. They have confessed it and predicted the ruin of the world because of interest. It can never be said, rationally and economically, that bank notes are not money based on *ribaa*. Today's economic system and its sciences consider money a product. If every product has a return, then capital is a product that must have a return, as do land, machines, and the laborer's work. But a look at Islam and its monetary philosophy, as we said before, shows that the two cashes and their substitutes are assessors, so their truth must not be inverted so that they become, according to the interest system, something to be assessed. Turning the facts of things upside down is a fraud to all rational people.

If bank note has replaced gold and silver in assessing commodities and laborer's wages and has become an

assessor, it takes on the reality of the two cashes, and so their rulings will apply to it. Then it will be irrational that a world economic system be based on bank note and then we claim that an increase on it does not represent prohibited *ribaa* and is permissible.

As for the researcher's claim regarding bank note's weak purchasing power when it is returned after the duration of the loan, it is a groundless assumption that is not on the mind of the giver or taker. There is no relation between it and the rate that is fixed as an increase on the capital, but, rather, the percentage is offered as a condition upon which the contract is made, regardless of the weakness or strength of the purchasing power. This is something absolutely clear that only the obstinate will argue with. This is explained by the question, If the bank note increases in purchasing power, will there follow a decrease in the rate of interest?

Thus, we see that the premises upon which Dr. Gamal Mursi Badr bases his conclusion are incorrect in themselves and that he assumes premises that take him to what he wants.

As to the *fatwa* of the [former] Grand Mufti of Egypt, Dr. Muhammad Sayed Tantawi, and how the writer describes it as being "historical" and "brave", historicity and bravery are

not proof of validity. Moreover, the writer does not stop at the *fatwa* to its allowing returns on investment certificates. He extends it to include bank note so that any increase in the capital, old or modern transaction, is not to be considered forbidden *ribaa* because *ribaa*, according to the researcher, occurs only in the two cashes, gold and silver. This is a broad claim, which the Mufti did not make.

The author of this work has a book entitled *Hiwar hawul Al-Ma`amalat Al-Masrafia* (*Dialogue on Banking Transactions*) as a reply to the *fatwa* of the Mufti. In addition to what the author of this book wrote, there are other works by specialized scholars as a response to it, and may Allah render our efforts fortunate.

**9.** Here now is the April 1993 article from the same magazine.

**a.** We have already summarized what Dr. Gamal Mursi Badr published saying that prohibited *ribaa* is in the two cashes, gold and silver, and that, to his mind, there is no *ribaa* in bank note. We made clear the contradictory system of this research and the objective contradiction, and we concluded that whatever applies to the two cashes applies to bank note; the increase on lending or depositing money in return for a

pre-determined a period of time is *ribaa*, and there is no doubt about it.

Now, what is the Islamic alternative and which system is worth working and calling for? For in this particular case, it is not enough to say something is forbidden without knowing an alternative, and Islam has not prohibited anything unless there is something permissible to replace the forbidden.

**b.** Dr. Mursi's article and the speech of the old ones is an old speech since the contact of Western civilization with the Muslims, their defeat in the mid-nineteenth century, and the determination of the West to defeat the Muslims intellectually after defeating them militarily. Calls went out, having been raised by imperialism, inviting people to adopt the courses of Western civilization, with its good and evil, to enable the Arabs and Muslims, as they alleged, to catch up with the West.

Therefore, they had to abandon their heritage of religion, culture, systems, and traditions. This call included the allegation that the cause for Muslims' backwardness was Islam itself, including its beliefs and systems, particularly the then existing financial system that was established on the prohibition of *ribaa*. After the English had occupied Egypt,

they raised to the Egyptians the slogan, "Had you been like us, you would have done what we have done." They meant, had you excluded Islam from your political and social lives, you would have progressed just like us.

**c.** Under the impact of this campaign and the heavy toll of psychological defeat before a triumphant power, some writers and those who claimed reform attempted to adapt *shari`ah* rules to the principles of Western civilization, particularly in terms of morals and social and economic customs. Western countries inaugurated banks with their known interest system in Islamic countries, which were not used to it.

As a result, the spirit of cooperation was destroyed, together with charity and easing the condition of the poor, which are specifically Muslim social duties. It was replaced by individualistic materialistic thinking that does not recognize the ties of brotherly faith. Bit by bit, capital moved to the owners these banks, and they controlled the economy of the Muslims. They even went so far as to devour their fortunes and houses by *ribaa.* Then all this became the property of colonials and foreigners supported by their governments, with their missionaries behind them advocating Christianity and casting doubts on Islam.

The history of English companies in the Indian continent is well known. They made an end to the Islamic Mogul State over there after it had governed the entire Indian continent for more than four hundred years!

The catastrophe in Egypt was more economic than otherwise until the eminent economist Tal`at Harb established Bank Misr, which protected a lot of its people's money. It is still operating today. It has responded to the spirit of Islamic revival and established many branches that are operating according to the Islamic system. They have attracted a lot of purists' money. I have myself reviewed the basis its Islamic system and the *fatwas* in them.

**d.** The economic backwardness existing today in Islamic countries is a result of melting the Islamic personality, with its ethical and *shari`ah* characteristics, to accord with the Western system, particularly economically and morally. Thus we have planted something alien in our character and have gained an unwholesome harvest. We have wasted our economic, political, and moral independence. We have been afflicted with poverty and have enabled imperialism to supersede until we lost our weight in the balance of proud countries.

And the *fatwa* allowing interest on bank note is a continuation of the defeated line of thought and whatever disasters were caused by it. We have supported it with *ijtihad* that drew conclusions first, then looked for premises for them. It is all right if we describe it as historical and brave to make it assume a certain value, but not to give it truth.

If we do this to our economy, it will be an intellectual, scientific, and practical defeat. In this same defeatist line we—including Egypt's Mufti—have offered a *fatwa* and we make use of all the countries of the West against an Islamic Nation. We have claimed that Islam has certain attributes that it does not have. The outcome has been the downfall of the Arab and Islamic worlds in the hands of this aggressive power in a manner unprecedented in the history of Muslims!

**e.** The professor praised the *fatwa* of the Mufti of Egypt, then further asked that it not be confined to Egyptian investment certificates but extended to cover all bank note transactions.

The logical, rational extension of his thought—while he demands the glorification of the mind—obliges him to extend it to the transactions between Islamic countries and the rich countries of the West, which have gone to all lengths to destroy us economically and politically and have

exhausted us with paying not only debts, but also their interest, until we have become totally impotent. I say the rational extension of the professor's reasoning requires that this transaction is *halal* and "*Bon appetit!*" May it have a delicious flavor and may it not be followed by indigestion, and why not? It is a deal not based on gold or silver but on paper, and there is no *ribaa* in paper; there is no text prohibiting it; and the cause prohibiting an increase in cash does not apply to it. And may the Western nations savor the delicacy of the *fatwa* of scholars and thinkers at the level of professorship, including the elite Mufti!

**f.** This is not the solution to the problems of Muslim immigrants alone. *Ribaa* is forbidden in both the Old and New Testaments, as we have quoted from their books. So, to present the problem as pertaining to Muslims only is short-sighted, an obstacle that hinders the sort of cooperation that the *shari`ah* makes possible between Muslims and People of the Book. I say the solution to the problem is not in this defeatist thinking but in establishing an Islamic system in the countries of immigration. Such a system would protect the Muslims from falling into something *haram* (prohibited) and being controlled by somebody else. It would give an Islamic model that is new to these communities and would act as a

strong practical call to Islam with actions, not words, and would acquaint others with it.

**g.** It is not an impossible mission, a far-fetched or vainglorious task, particularly in countries where liberty is set on such an inestimable pedestal and where there is a place for everyone endowed with wisdom and determination.

It is very easy to form a qualified panel to study the Islamic system. There are some former examples that were operating in some Arab countries and even in China. The panel can then plan and call upon the immigrants for financial contributions to set up an Islamic system based on silent partnership, factorage, and all kinds of companies. If their efforts continued, after time they could even go into farming, and there is a place for it. The field also encourages investment in buildings, which would make a profit and provide housing for the resident and the newcomer.

Thus, the Muslims would become an effective human and economic power that would be of use to itself, its religion, and its nation; affect public opinion; keeps its character and assets; and display the advantages of their religion and win support for their causes. The Muslims would be living witnesses for their religion, whereas they are today in an

alien country serving as witnesses against their country of origin.

**h.** Now after the above survey, it is a wonder that we would turn our thought to this cultural and Islamic juridic glory and its good effects, then compromise it, along with our character, in a sinful, destructive call that we later praise as historical and courageous. Thus, we shall be lavishing praise and wasting distinguished titles on those who do not deserve them.

Jews, particularly in America, are practicing something akin to what I want. They their money in safe-deposits in banks, and only the owners know what is inside them. They establish free enterprises in which they may hire Muslims. I saw this with my own eyes. Shall we learn from our own "cousins"? Or do we still insist on wasting, getting wasted, and marching on the road of defeat and defeatists?

## (12)

## THE MEAT PROBLEM

## (HALAL MEAT)

**1.** Islam pays great attention to man's food, particularly slaughtered animals and meat. This attention is due to Islam's devotion to purity, both spiritual and physical. No wonder! It was said, Tell me what you eat, I'll tell you who you are.

Moreover, Islam pays such great attention to man's food that it makes rules concerning it among the obligations that a Muslim should fulfill for his faith to be complete and whose breaching contradicts faith. Allah the Almighty says in the beginning of Surah Al-Ma'idah:

﴾*O you who believe! Fulfill the pledges. All kinds of cattle-like animals have been made lawful to you except those which are now recited to you...*﴿

(Al-Ma'idah, 1)

The exceptions that are named are mentioned generally in

> ❴*But certainly what Allah has forbidden to you are dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has had other than the name of Allah invoked upon it*❵
> (Al-Baqarah, 173)

And they are mentioned in detail in

> ❴*Prohibited to you are dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has had other than the name of Allah invoked upon it, that which has been killed by strangling or by a violent blow, or by falling, or by being butted to death by horns, or which has been devoured by beasts of prey, except that which you have duly slaughtered while it was still alive. Also unlawful to you is that which is sacrificed to idols and divided by raffling with arrows, this is impiety*❵
> (Al-Ma'idah, 3)

Islam's care with respect to food is not limited only to the physical effects in a way for us to say that dead meat and blood have been made forbidden for the harm they cause to

the body, and the flesh of swine for its dirtiness, the worms it contains, the debauchery it leads to, and the like that relates to the body and morals. Rather, there is a more accurate and hidden goal behind forbidding these, which relates to the relationship between man and Allah. The monkey and pig represent the wrath of Allah on man who rebelled against Allah's way, for when Allah the Almighty got angry with a given people, He transformed them into monkeys and pigs. Hence, man's eating one or both of them and making it part of his body is something risky to his humanity and spirituality by which he realizes his relationship to Allah and the reality behind his existence.

Therefore, pigs were forbidden on the tongues of prophets who are interpreters of Paradise. The texts were limited to swine, as it was eaten. As for monkeys, they were not eaten by any people, so no prohibition was needed, just like wolf —concerning which the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Does anyone eat it?"—, and the domestic donkey, which is set as an example of ignorance and living in subservience and which can, as we were told by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) see the devil.

Give an investigating look at the *jallalah* (the animal that eats feces and droppings of animals till its smell changes).

The *jallalah* may include *an`am* (cattle, camels, sheep, goats), chickens, and geese. It was declared forbidden to eat its flesh, drink its milk, or ride on its back (narrated by the five with the exception of Ibn Majah). Abu Dawud also narrated: Riding (on the back of) the *jallahah* has been declared forbidden. This is one of the morals of Islam and its ameliorative goals that elevate man's humanity, and an example of its cultural treasures that purify man both physically and spiritually.

At the same time it causes sadness and grief to see how Muslims have deteriorated away from that Islamic nobleness to the extent that they are an example of impurity, or thus they have become thought of. I met an American woman called Karen, who is very intelligent, has a strong personality and spiritual transparency, and who aspires to spiritual loftiness; all this along with the fact she has a doctorate in design and has received several international awards in that field. She converted to Islam because of what she learned of its creed, values, and the dignity it gave to women. She told me that a non-Muslim friend visited her home, and her attention was drawn by the cleanness and tidiness of her house. She commented, "Your figure is fine and your house is tidy though you are Muslim! How can this be while Muslim women are fat and dirty?"

How many times have I talked to those Muslims living there relating to their ears this incident and like that they may wake up and observe what may elevate their religion and their stature, but how can I grieve over a people who are between dozing and sleeping?

Moreover, the Qur'an indicates the prohibition of eating the flesh of monkeys, as they are not included in the list of *an`am* (cattle, camels, sheep, goats). Imam Ash-Sha`rani related in his book *Al-Mizan* (vol. 1, p. 48) that a man from Kufa entered upon Imam Abu Hanifah while Prophetic hadiths were being narrated and said, "Let's not listen to these hadith." The imam rebuked him sharply and said, "Were it not for the Prophetic sunnah, none of us would be able to understand the Qur'an." Then he asked the man, "What do you say about the flesh of monkeys? And what is its proof in the Qur'an?" The man was unable to answer and said to him, "So, what do you say?" The imam said, "Monkeys are not among the beasts of *an`am*."

**2.** The comprehensive principle of *shari`ah* regarding whether food is *halal* (lawful) or *haram* (prohibited) emanates from these Islamic ethics in elevating man, as it makes what is good and wholesome *halal* and what is noxious and harmful *haram*. All that it makes lawful is

wholesome, and all that it makes prohibited is noxious. The Qur'an compares the two in a way that negates their equality, through the noxious may surpass the good. It says

> ❨*Say, "The pure and the impure are not equal, though the abundance of the impure may allure you much."*❩
> (Al-Ma'idah, 100)

What is meant by "the pure" of food is that which in itself is void of harm and is palatable to people in general with their sound nature (*fitrah*).

What is meant by "the impure" of food is that which is dissimilar to the good in itself and in the taste of natural instinct (*fitrah*). Due to this Islamic principle, the Qur'an rejected the prohibition of what is good, saying

> ❨*Say, "Who has forbidden the ornament of Allah which He brought forth for His servants...*❩
> (Al-A'raf, 32)

Rather, it made prohibiting some of the lawful things just like deviating from Allah's course and lying against it, for it says

﴾*Say, "Have you seen the sustenance which Allah has sent down for you, then you make thereof some lawful and some unlawful." Say, "Has Allah permitted that to you, or do you invent of yourselves and attribute it to Allah?"*﴿

(Yunus, 59)

Islam goes further with its general humanity to legalize good things for all people, the believers and unbelievers. The Qur'an says

﴾*O you people! Eat of what is lawful and good on the earth, and do not follow Satan's footsteps, surely he is an abject enemy to you.*﴿

(Al-Baqarah, 168)

**3.** The specific principle regarding the permissibility of food—with exception of what is made unlawful by Islamic law—relates to the general principle in *shari'ah* that permissibility is the origin of all things until there comes some ruling that excludes them from this general principle.

By applying this specific principle on food, and the general one on all things, Muslim scholars regarded certain things that The Legislator (Allah) has not excluded from either the

general principle or the specific one and said that they are lawful. Such things are hyenas, frogs, lizards, hedgehogs, mice, insects, scorpions, worms, and cheese maggots. In so doing, they base their rulings on this: what has been made lawful by Allah is lawful, what has been made unlawful by Allah is unlawful, and what Allah has kept silent about is permissible. So, anyone who finds these animals and insects tasty is free to eat them, and anyone who finds them displeasing cannot be forced to eat them or even blamed. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was once served a lizard by some women who agreed not to tell him till they saw how he tasted or refused it. He (peace be upon him) used to not eat anything until he knew what it was. When he asked about it and knew that it was a lizard, he did not approach it. Khalid asked him, "Is it *haram*?" The prophet (peace be upon him) said, "No but it is unknown to my people, so I find myself disgusted by it." Or he said, "A food that is not known to my people." Khalid said: I dragged it to myself and started to eat while the Prophet (peace by upon him) kept looking at me. Then, the Prophet was brought some old dates and he started to search them to get the worms out of them.

So, if anyone is disgusted by some of these vermin or others that have been killed in an unusual way—which I will mention later on—and which no text has prohibited, he

should not make his own taste a general rule for all people, for jurisprudence (*fiqh*), or for scholars' independent judgments (*ijtihad*).

**4. Slaughtering**

Ibn Al-Jauzi says in his book *Al-Adhikya'* that the words *dhakah* and *tadhkiyah*, which both mean slaughtering, come from the same root as the words meaning perfection, completeness, and removal. In *Mufradat Al-Qur'an* it says that the negative meaning of these words is to completely remove the soul and negate the natural life (of an animal). I say that, taking these meanings together, if an animal is hit or given electric shocks and life still remains, and then a man completes the slaughter by cutting the throat, the life is removed, and the animal is slaughtered in the linguistic sense. *Tafsir Al-Manar* (vol. 6, pp. 143-44) mentions that cutting the throat (*dhabah*) is only an example of killing an animal. There are also hitting, stabbing, and strangulation of game by a hunting animal. The Prophet (peace be upon him) made piercing with an arrow and killing by a trained dog Islamically legal slaughtering [provided that the dog does not partially eat the game].

This is proved by an agreed-upon hadith reported by `Adiy:

> I said, "O Messenger of Allah, I set my trained dogs out to hunt down game for me, and I always mention the name of Allah as they set out." The Prophet said, "So long as you mention the name of Allah upon setting your trained dog for hunting game, you are permitted to eat from the prey it hunts." I asked, "Even if it is completely killed?" The Prophet answered, "Yes, even if it is completely killed, unless another dog has shared the hunting process with your dog." I further asked, "I also hunt game by shooting a *mi'rad* [a featherless iron arrow] at it, and it hits the game." The Prophet said, "So long as your *mi'rad* pierces the game, you may eat it. But never eat the game if it hit by the side of your *mi'rad.*

In another narration of the hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said, "Mention the name of Allah upon setting your trained dog to hunt game. If you reach the game while it is still alive, cut its throat (before eating). And if you find it completely killed by your trained dog and it did not eat from it, you may eat from it, for killing by a trained dog is a (legal) slaughtering."

In his *Muntaqa Al-Akhbar* (which was later verified by Ash-Shawkani in his *Nail Al-Awtar*), Imam Ibn Taimiyah

commented on the above hadith: "This hadith serves as a good demonstration of the permission to eat the meat of hunted by a trained dog, whether it has strangled or merely injured it."[1]

Thus, the literal and technical meaning of the words *dhakah* and *tadhkiyah* refer to complete killing of animal with the purpose of having its meat for food and not to torture the animal, whether the killing is done by a man, a trained dog, or piercing with an arrow.

5. This does not deny the validity of the jurists' usage of the word *dhakah* or *tadhkiyah* to mean cutting the throat in particular, because they pay more consideration to peoples' habits than to the linguistic or technical meaning of the word. They justified their usage of the word with fact that cutting the throat lets the blood, which may be harmful, get out of the animal's body. This justification depends on their understanding and *ijtihad*, not on a *shari`ah* text on which basis there may or may not be a legal judgment. Yet, if it were as they said, it would not have been permitted to eat the meat of game killed by a trained dog, an arrow shot by

[1]See *Nail Al-Awtar* with the commentary on *Muntaqa al-Akhbar* (vol. 8, p. 130) and *Tafsir Al-Manar* (vol. 6, p. 144).

someone, or by piercing with a *mi`rad,* or injured by a gun. This is because in killing or injuring by any of these means, no blood or much less blood is drained from the game's body than by cutting the throat.

In his *tafsir* (explanation) of the Qur'an (vol. 6, pp. 144-145), Sheikh Rashid Reda said:

> I think that had the Prophet (peace be upon him) known more tender ways to slaughter an animal such as by electric shocks, he would have definitely admitted or preferred them to cutting the throat. This depends on the legal rule that people are forbidden things that harm themselves or other living beings, and killing an animal by a violent blow definitely harms it. Having investigated scholars' reports on slaughtering, we understand that the *shari`ah* aims at avoiding animal torture as much as possible. Thus, both the ways that cause the animal's blood to flow copiously and those that cause it to stream in small amounts are lawful.

In his *Al-Lisan*, he said that in a hadith reported by `Adiy bin Hatim, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Cause an animal's blood to flow by whatever way you like." In *Tafsir*

*Al-Manar* he said that this hadith does not refer to letting the blood flow copiously in particular.

And he reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded that before slaughtering, one should sharpen the knife, blade, or whatever is to be used. He also permitted the use of sharpened stone tools or the sharpened side of a stick as slaughtering tools. Anyway, people of every time and place may slaughter animals using whatever tools they deem suitable for the purpose.

Furthermore, Sheikh Rashid Reda continued, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "This category of animals (camels) may act as wild, undomesticated animals. If a camel runs away wildly, you may kill it by shooting it with an arrow (and its meat is lawful food)." The majority of *Salafi* scholars use this hadith to demonstrate the lawfulness of eating the meat of a wild, undomesticated, or runaway animal when it is injured or even killed by an arrow.

6. The above discussion raises an important question concerning the Muslims living in Christian Western countries. Is it lawful to eat from the meat of an animal unfatally hit on the head, or shocked by electricity that does not kill it, then it is slaughtered? Before answering this

question, I would like to hint at the situation of the Muslims living in these countries.

- They are not sure that they slaughter animals in the correct way by cutting the animals' throat, esophagus, and the jugular veins.

- They know that among the ways to slaughter an animal is to separate its head from its body using a guillotine.

- I was told that a Muslim veterinarian had seen the way they slaughter animals and had advised to shock the animal first by electricity so that they might control it, then to cut its throat.

- Some Muslims sell meat advertised as *halal*, but for very high prices. I was informed that some of them get the meat from common slaughter houses and falsely sell it as *halal* meat.

- I visited some shops where meat is sold and found that the meat was pink, indicating that it was slaughtered in some manner that caused the blood to flow copiously.

Here, it is important to clarify the meaning of the word *munkhaniqah* (killed by strangling), which is one of the ten

kinds of food forbidden by a Qur'anic injunction (Al-Ma'idah, 3). Investigating the Arabic word, scholars concluded that there must be a distinction between an animal strangled by somebody and that strangled by itself such as by inserting its head in a narrow place from which it cannot get out and struggling until it dies. As for the legal judgment pertaining to eating the meat of either animal, scholars concluded that what is forbidden is the meat of the one strangled by itself. This is because it has turned into carrion since the blood is congealed in the veins and the animal died before being slaughtered.

Now to answer the above question: Is it lawful to eat from the meat of an animal that is unfatally hit on the head, or shocked by electricity that does not kill it, then slaughtered?

As for the animal slaughtered by cutting two or three of the four (throat, esophagus, and the two jugular veins) after its being severely beaten or shocked by electricity but still alive, it is definitely *halal* to have it for food.

7. In order to make the doubtful quite sure of the above judgment, I report the following:

- In his *Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, the Maliki jurist Ibn Al-`Arabi interpreted this verse:

> *❬All that is good and pure has today been permitted to you, and the food of the people of earlier Scripture is permissible to you, and your food is permissible to them, and you are permitted to marry chaste believing women and chaste women from among the people who were given earlier Scripture before you if you give them their dowries in wedlock, not fornicating nor taking them for intimates in secret, and whoever rejects the faith his deeds are vain and in the Hereafter he shall be one of the losers.❭*
>
> (Al-Ma'idah,5)

Ibn Al-`Arabi said:

> This is a decisive demonstration that game and food of the People of the Book are among the good things that Allah has made lawful for Muslims. Allah has put it clearly so as to remove any kind of ambiguity that may raise doubts. In this regard I remember that I was asked about the judgment pertaining to a Muslim sharing a chicken with a Christian who had killed it by twisting its neck. My answer concluded that it is definitely lawful because it is his food, which Allah has made lawful for Muslims, even if it is not slaughtered in the Islamic way. Since the Qur`anic verse is general, all that the People of the Book deem

lawful for themselves, unless there is a legal evidence belying them, is lawful for Muslims. Some Muslim scholars commented: How can we not have the animals slaughtered by the People of the Book for food while, according to the verse, we can have their women as wives?

- The author of *Tafsir Al-Manar* commented on the above interpretation of Ibn Al-`Arabi: "Ibn Al-`Arabi's interpretation included some kind of restriction. He had taken the food of Christian priests, monks and other people of religion into consideration." He said that this is what Professor Imam Sheikh Muhammad `Abduh, the Mufti of Egypt, used in his Transvaal *Fatwa*. Sheikh Rashid reported opinions of earlier and modern scholars supporting the views of Ibn Al-`Arabi (See *Tafsir Al-Manar*, vol. 6, pp. 205-209).

- Supporting the view of Ibn Al-`Arabi, Shiekh Mahmud Shaltut said in his *tafsir*:

> A group of Muslim scholars believes that Allah the Glorious made the food of the People of the Book lawful for Muslims and He knows all what the People of the Book say and do. The verse ❮*the food of the people of earlier Scripture is permissible to you*❯ (Al-

Ma'idah, 5) came to clarify an exception of the foods forbidden for Muslims. This means that a Muslim may eat from the food (meat) of the People of the Book, no matter the way of slaughtering. This was the purport of Ibn Al-`Arabi's *fatwa* on the subject.

The majority of scholars concluded a similar opinion, believing that the verse ❬*the food of the people of earlier Scripture is permissible to you*❭ came to remove the blame on Muslims for eating from the food of the People of the Book and from the meat of the animals they slaughter. Scholars have also concluded that people of different religions are allowed to deal and transact with each other. Yet, it should be taken into consideration that for the food of the People of the Book to be lawful for Muslims, it must never include any of the kinds prohibited by the preceding verse (Al-Ma'idah, 3), even if the People of the Book deem it lawful for themselves.

Sheikh Shaltut then reported two *fatwas* concluded by the Fatwa Committee of Al-Azhar. The first came during the sheikdom of Al-Imam Al-Akbar Abu Al-Majid Salim, while the second occurred during the sheikhdom of Al-Imam Al-Akbar Muhammad Mustafa Al-Maraghi. Both *fatwas* came

in accordance with the *fatwa* concluded by Sheikh Muhammad `Abduh in his Transavaal *Fatwa.*

- Telling about the Transavaal *Fatwa,* Sheikh Rashid Reda said (in his *Tafsir* vol. 6, p. 196) that Professor Al-Imam Al-Mufti [Sheikh Muhammad `Abduh] was asked: Is it lawful to eat from the meat of animals slaughtered by some of the People of the Book living in the Transvaal region of South Africa, who hit an ox on the head with an ax, then slaughter it without mentioning the name of Allah, as they do not mention the name of Allah upon slaughtering? He replied that it is lawful for Muslims to eat the meat of animals that the People of the Book slaughter in this way. Some of the opponents of the *fatwa* attacked it, considering animals slaughtered in such a way to be killed by a violent blow and thus included in the types of food prohibited by the verse (Al-Ma'idah, 3). Opponents also claimed that the forbiddance of eating the meat of such animals is proven by the majority opinion among scholars. Sheikh Rashid Reda reported also that a committee of jurists belonging to the four schools of jurisprudence met and recommended a *fatwa* supporting that of Sheikh Muhammad `Abduh.

With this detailed explanation we conclude that for Muslims in the Western countries, according to the *ijtihad* of scholars,

eating meat, if it is not forbidden in itself—such as dead meat, blood, pigs, animals slaughtered in the name of another god or not killed for eating—and even if it is not slaughtered in our way, is allowed.

But we should know that the root of this problem and many others like it comes from breaking apart and disuniting. Group spirit and cooperation with each other are not there. They direct most of their effort to life, and what is left is for backbiting, breaking Muslims apart, and dividing Muslims into friends and enemies. But if they applied the spirit and manners of Islam among themselves and believed that Muslims have a unique personality shaped by Islam and behaved accordingly, these problems would not come up, their life would not be complicated, and they would not be torn between their belief and the conditions around them. Then they would be a model of *da'wah* to Allah and would open hearts and eyes to His religion. They would be the heirs of the *Salaf*, who opened countries by their character and good manners in their travels.

I don't have anything to say—I was so tired of warning them and turning their attention—but to Allah we belong and to Him we are returning.

## (13)

## CREED, ALLAH'S ATTRIBUTES, AND RATIONAL STUDY

### 1. The One and Only

Praise be to Allah, Who is not multiple, the Sole One Whom nothing resembles.[1] He is not limited by time or place,[2] and He is with us everywhere. No matter how time changes, He

[1]Ibn Hazm denied that Al-Fard (The Sole One) is one of Allah's names. *Al-Fasl fi Al-Milal*, vol. 2, p. 344 ('Ukadh, Saudi Arabia: Maktabat 'Ukadh, 1402 A.H./1982 A.D.). See also *Fath Al-Bari Bisharh Sahih Al-Bukhari* by Al-Hafidh Ibn Hajjar Al-Asqalani, vol. 11, p. 180 (Egypt: 'Abdur-rahman Muhammad, Al-Azhar Square, 1348 A.H.).

[2]Ibn Hazm denied the statement of scholars, "Allah is everywhere." He instead said, "Allah is with us everywhere." (*Al-Fasl*, vol. 2, p. 288).

does not change. Allah is not restricted to one place.[3] He is the Eternal[4] and all other creatures are mere mortals. He is Outward (Evident) by signs of His existence in the universe, Inward due to His Self. Minds cannot perceive Him nor can imaginations picture Him.[5] All people agree that He is only known through intellect.[6] Once, Dhi`lib Al-Yamani asked Imam `Ali, "Did you see your Lord?" He (May Allah be pleased with him) answered, "How can I worship what I do not see?" Dhi`lib said, "How do we see Him?" Imam `Ali replied, "He is not perceived by eyes of mere witnessing but by hearts of true faith. He is nearer than anything but not tangible; far but not visible; speaker but not through

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[3]*Nahj al-Balaghah* by Imam `Ali (May Allah be pleased with him) and explained by Imam Sheikh Muhammad `Abduh, vol. 1, p. 160. (Egypt: Al-Maktabah At-Tugariyah, Muhammad `Ali Street, undated). Edited by Sheikh Muhammad Muhi Ad-din `Abdul-Hamid.

[4]Ibn Hazm denied that Al-Baqi (The Eternal) is one of Allah's names, and this is mentioned in At-Tirmidhi's *Al-Asma' Al-Husna.*

[5]*Al-`Aqidah At-Tahawiyah.* Explained by Sadr Ad-din `Ali bin `Ali bin Muhammad bin Abi Al-`Iz and edited by Sheikh Ahmad Muhammad Shakir (Cairo: Dar At-Turath, undated). Also Sheikh Muhammad `Abduh in his explanation of *Nahj al-Balaghah*, vol. 1, p. 108.

[6]Ibn Al-Qayim, *Aqsam Al-Qur'an*, vol. 6, edited by Sheikh Muhammad Al-Fiqi (Beirut: Dar Al-Ma`rifah).

narration; willing but not through determination; Creator but not through organs. He is Ever-Gentle Who cannot be described as invisible; the Formidable Who cannot be described as harsh; the Ever-Aware Who cannot be described through sense organs, the Most Merciful Who cannot be described as tender. All faces are subservient to His Might and all hearts tremble from fear of Him."[7]

If one describes Him as having an eye, a hand, or an organ, he compares Him to something, and if one compares Him, his conscience has never known Him.

I witness that there is no god but He, the Ever-Old[8] Whose existence has no beginning, the Eternal Whose existence has

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[7]*Nahj Al-Balaghah*, vol. 2, p. 120.

[8]At-Tusi denied that Al-Qadim (the Ever-Old) is one of Allah's names, but this is a mere opinion that is invalidated by what Al-Baihaqi reported in *Al-Asma' Al-Husna*. See also *Al-I`tiqad `ala Madhhab As-Salaf Ahl As-Sunnah* and *Al-Jama`ah* by Al-Baihaqi (Cairo: As-Salam Al-`Alamiah, Al-Falaki Street, Bab Al-Luq, undated).
In *Tariq Al-Hijratain*, p. 151, Ibn Al-Qayim mentioned that Al-Hassan or others said, "The Companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) used to say, 'Exalted be our Lord, Al-Qadim.'" (Cairo: Dar At-Tiba`ah Al-Muniriyah, Darb Al-Atrak, 1357 A.H.). See also *Fath Al-Bari*, vol. 11, p. 180; *Misbah Al-Munir* under the section "Qadim"; *Matn At-Tahawiyah* explained by Al-Ghunimi, 2nd ed. (Dar Al-Fikr,

no end. I witness that Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is a servant and Messenger of Allah, the leader of the knowledgeable, master of worshipers, and mercy of Allah for the worlds. He, out of his mercy towards his nation, was hesitant in telling them what he knew lest they become weary[9] He said "O people of Muhammad, if you know what I know, you will laugh little and weep much."

O Allah! Bestow Your blessings on him who was tender and merciful with the believers. I wish I were before him, then I would wash his feet and kiss him from head to toe.

**2. Is This a Sign of Defective Faith?**

In fact, I have a pessimistic view towards the reality of the Muslim awakening if it keeps such characteristics and features that are distinguished by excessiveness.

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1402 A.H./1982 A.D.) edited by Muhammad Muti' Al-Hafidh and Muhammad Riyad Al-Malih, p. 52. See also *Al-Maqsid Al-Insi fi Sharh Asma' Allah Al-Husna* by Al-Ghazali, edited by Muhammad 'Uthmân Al-Khishn (Cairo: Maktabat Al-Qur'an, Bulaq, undated), p. 155.

[9] *Sahih Muslim* explained by Imam An-Nawawi, vol. 3, p. 115 (Cairo: Mustafa Al-Babi Al-Halabi, Al-Azhar, undated).

I mean excessiveness in embellishments and calling others to it, even persisting in doing so. They advocate the call for this embellishment and appreciate its people and belittle anything else along with its proponents. They depict such *da`wah* as a magic key to solve all the problems of Muslims and believe that the obligation of jihad and the cause of captive Jerusalem will not be achieved except by those who wear *jilbabs* and let their beards grow. They further quote in support of their idea that when Salah Ad-din intended to liberate Jerusalem, he wore a *jilbab* and let his beard grow. They also believe that speeches delivered on pulpits and in mosques and other discussions should center on the *jilbab* and beard. Their *fatwa* that shaving the beard is *haram* is decisive. In addition, they printed and distributed books related to this point. Only the *jilbab* and beard can get them furious for the sake of Islam. They also make them the only criterion to judge faith and its degree. Yet when demanded of them, they do not bring any text—of any rank of its transmission or words—in support of wearing a *jilbab* or even regarding it. The wonder is that in their viewpoint, wearing the *jilbab* and letting the beard grow take priority over the liberation of Jerusalem, Palestine, and other Muslim lands and are the only means to achieve the hopes of Islam and Muslims.

If you try discuss this with them, they will reply, "We want all Muslims to fulfill the whole of Islam." In so doing they want to burden people with what Allah and His Messenger and the Rightly Guided Caliphs alleviated them of.

In his explanation of Allah's saying ❬*If you avoid the heinous sins that are forbidden you...*❭ (An-Nisa', 31), Ibn Jarir reported from Ibn `Aun from Al-Hassan on the authority of Ibn `Amr:

> Some people asked `Abdullah bin `Amr in Egypt, "Why do we find some things in the Book of Allah that are ordered to be done, but they do not do them? And we want to meet the Commamder of the Faithful to discuss this matter with him." `Abdullah bin `Amr gathered those people and went to Madinah and met `Umar (May Allah be pleased with him). `Umar asked, "When did you arrive?" "At such-and-such time," `Abdullah replied. "Did you take permission to come?" The narrator said, I do not know what his reply. Ibn `Amr said, "O Commander of the Faithful, some people met me in Egypt and said, 'We find some things in the Book of Allah that are ordered to be done but they do not them,' and they want to meet you to discuss this matter." He said, "Gather all of them." He

said, I did as I was ordered. Ibn `Aun said, I think he said this was in a hall. `Umar took the one nearest them and asked, "By Allah and the right of Islam on you, did you read the whole Qu'ran?" The man replied, "Yes." `Umar asked, "Did you understand it and abide by it?" "By Allah, no." If he had answered, "Yes," he [`Umar] would have argued with him, Ibn `Aun said. "Did you apply it with respect to your sight? Did you apply it with respect to your sayings? Did you apply it with respect to your walking?" He continued until he reached them all. "May `Umar's mother lose him!" `Umar said. "Do you oblige him to enforce people to fulfill the Book of Allah when our Lord knew that we would commit some sins and He says, ❨*If you avoid the heinous sins that are forbidden you, We will acquit you of your evil deeds.*❩?" He further asked, "Did the people of Madinah..." or he said, "Did anyone know what you have presented?" "No," they replied. "If they knew that, I would preach about you concerning that," said `Umar.

Ibn Kathir commented that its chain of transmission is sound and its text is good.

This is the guidance of Allah and the Rightly Guided Caliphs. But as for their guidance (in America), it is stained with excessiveness pertaining to unseen matters of the grave and its torment and books on Paradise and Hellfire, but Islam and cases of life are stained with negligence and indifference.

There is excessiveness in the divine unseen by adhering to one method and rejecting anything else, and even stigmatizing others with disbelief, deviation, hypocrisy, and ignorance.

There is excessiveness in what is thought to be speculative evidence to turn it into decisive evidence.

All of these are not their own ideas or thoughts, but just books thrown at them. They blindly repeat them and make them the most reliable and well-known ones, without exerting any effort to revise, criticize, or clarify their aims.

It is strange enough that they make these books the sole criterion to judge others. They also aggressively assault most notable scholars, even on the pulpit, but if they are summoned to prove the validity and reliability of their sources, they fail and refuse to do so.

In America and other Muslim countries, the issue of "Allah is in the heaven" has proponents who have made it a case for study and a criterion of judging faith. If you do not admit this, you have, at best, defective faith and lack conviction!

### 3. The First Duty: To Know Allah

Allah the Almighty laid down the basics of human sociology when He revealed:

> ❮*surely, Allah does not change the condition of a people unless they change what is in themselves*❯
> (Ar-Ra`d, 11)

And in His Book He revealed to all mankind the end of believers and disbelievers and how He graciously rewards His followers and justly punishes the disbelievers. He narrated to us stories of the previous nations in which these rules were applied to be examples to those who have understanding. It is accepted that righteousness or immorality is due to and stems from the validity or invalidity of belief, and from the soundness or unsoundness of the human conception of the relationships between man, the universe, and life. Consequently, both the Qur'an and the Prophet (peace be upon him) placed great importance on the propagation of Islam. The Prophet (peace be upon him) wrote to notable kings and rules to call them to Islam and to testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. Monotheism (*tawhid*) is the essence of Islam upon which everything related to it is built.

Monotheism (*tawhid*) is to believe that Allah has no partner in His godhead and His characteristics, or, as Al-Hafidh reported after Al-Junaid, it is to distinguish the Eternal One from mortal creatures.

This belief constitutes the most important one in the sciences of Muslims. Ibn `Abbas reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "The first word your children should hear after birth and what you should dictate at the time of death is, There is no god but Allah"[10]

Consequently, Muslim scholars state that the first duty is to know Allah. Whoever said that the first duty is to doubt is the one who wanted to build faith upon personal conviction that can be acquired by contemplating evidence. This is a unique characteristic of Muslim scholars, who laid it down on the basis of aims of the Qu'ran. There is a lesson in this for one who repeats statements from others, not caring if they are false, and after all of this he sees no wrong to judge people as sinners in what he repeated.

If man acquires the knowledge of monotheism and does his best to recognize its signs and evidence in souls and the

universe, he truly attains perfection and happiness and gives things their due estimation. The happiness of this person will surpass everything, for happiness and spiritual peace are indispensable. A poet said:

> If it is said to the mad man of Qais and Laila:
> Do you want Laila and relationship with her or life and what is in it?
> He will surely say: Dust from her shoes is more appealing to me and a healer from her tragedy.

In worldly life, to know Allah in a perfect way is beyond the capacity of man. We have no decisive evidence that anyone ever saw Allah in his wakefulness, but I know a man who saw Allah twice in his dreams. If one lives and does his best to know Allah, Allah will complete it for him in the Hereafter. There are many narrations related that after death, Allah will complete for the people of happiness among His servants what they were unable to complete in worldly life. In addition, it is also said that if one dies while seeking

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[10]Reported by Al-Hakim and mentioned by As-Suyuti in *Al-Jami' Al-Kabir*.

knowledge, it will be completed for him after death. The same is applied to the one who learns the Qu'ran.[11]

The limits of knowing Allah are clearly defined in a Prophetic hadith reported by Ibn `Abbas: Some people pondered over Allah the Almighty. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Ponder over Allah's creation and not over Allah, for surely you will not give Allah His true estimate."[12]

In another narration, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Some people will keep on asking and questioning, until it will be said, 'Allah created the whole creation, then who

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[11]Ibn Al-Qayim, *Tuhfat Al-Maudud bi Ahkam Al-Maulud*, 2nd. ed., edited by Bashir Muhammad 'Uyun (Damascus: Maktabat Dar Al-Bayan, 1407 A.H.).

[12]Al-`Iraqi said that it is reported by Abu Na`im in *Al-Hilyah* in a weak transmission. It is also reported by Al-Asbahani in a sound transmission in *At-Targhib wa Al-Tarhib*, and also by Abu Ash-Sheikh. Sheikh Muhammad `Abduh mentioned it in his explanation of *Al-`Aqa'id Al-`Adudiyah*, p. 64, and he mentioned the hadith which states, "Exalted be You, Lord, we do not know You (in Your due knowing) properly." This is what is also mentioned by Ad-Dawani in his explanation of *Al-`Adudiyah*, p. 65.

created Allah?' Therefore, if one meets something like this he should say, 'I believe in Allah.'"[13]

This is not an order from the Prophet (peace be upon him) against refuting doubts and suspicion with evidence and proofs, but a guidance, in case of Satan's whispers, to declare your faith and take refuge in Allah against Satan's recurrent whispers. As for strong doubt and suspicions, Islamic *shari`ah* is not against refuting them through scrutinized study and deduction.[14]

Whoever knows himself and knows the majesty of his Lord cannot ever deny that he falls short of realization of the Supreme Self. It is sufficient for us what is reported after the Prophet and Abu Bakr As-Siddiq: To fail to realize the High Self is realization in itself.[15]

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[13]Reported by Muslim and Al-Bukhari in The book of the Beginning of Creation, and in *Al-`Itisam bi Al-Kitab.*

[14]See *Fath Al-Bari,* vol. 6, p. 260, Book of the Beginning of Creation.

[15]It means that to confess that you fail to realize the Sublime Self is really a realization that distinguishes it and makes it unique in respect to all other truths. Muhammad `Abduh in his explanation of *Al-`Aqa'id Al-`Adudiyah*, (Al-Matba`ah Al-Khayriyah, 1322 A.H.), p. 64. This is a unique book of which I was advised by the Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar Dr. `Abdur-Rahman Tag (May Allah be merciful to him)

This is the status of knowing The Worshiped, exalted be He, and its fruits, but what is the ruling of its defense through rational proofs?

Among the wonders of juristic insight and an indication of the uniqueness of Islam is the scholars' decision that in every distance of *qasr* (the distance traveled in which one can shorten his prayers) there should be at least one person who has the ability to examine and explain evidence and texts in way that enables him to refute doubts, convince opponents, and guide the seekers after truth. He is called the one who is entrusted with defense and deterrence. It is prohibited for the imam or ruler to pull such a person out of the *qasr* distance. It is also prohibited to deprive a region which equals the distance of a *ghadwa*[16] from a person who is well-versed in *shari`ah* and judgments which common people are in need of.

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during my study in the Faculty of Islamic Theology, Al-Azhar University. This explanation of Imam Muhammad `Abduh is considered one of his most invaluable works, through which his thought, genius, and school of belief are represented.

[16]*Al-Ghadwa* is a period equal to one's leaving home early and returning in the evening. In *As-Sahah*, *al-ghadwa* is a period between early morning prayer and sunrise, but it is not meant here.

Only to Allah do we complain of this time in which landmarks of knowledge and priority are blotted out, places and circles of ignorance are constructed, and those who are ignorant are charged with leading knowledgeable people and distinguishing among them by seeking the help of the unjust and despotic who are their proponents and servants and strive to achieve their aims.[17]

To Allah we complain of a time in which this Islamic privilege and juristic characteristic are lost and Islam has divided between those who give no consideration to it, either through rational proofs or texts, and those who speak in its name and its *da`wah* but discriminate between intellect and *shari`ah* and infuriate those who defend Islam through intellect and reasoning.[18]

Imam Muhammad `Abduh said:

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[17]Al-Jalah Ad-Diwani, explanation of *Al-`Aqa'id Al-`Adudiyah*, p. 68.

[18]When my book *Tahafut qabl As-Suqut* (*Collapse before Falling*) was published, a notable person in the field of *da`wah* said to me, "I blame you that in refuting the claims of secularists, you depended on intellect." "What do you want?" I asked. He replied, "From cover to cover, 'Allah said' and 'the Messenger said.'" I said, "This is what logician's call seizure, which means basing a case on evidence! They objected to text (alone) saying that it is insufficient these days!"

We have reached a time in which ignorance is boasted of, falsehood is appreciated, and whoever reads books of theology is judged as a disbeliever. They are frightened away from confirming the creeds of Islam and raising a defense against doubts. They cling to useless traditions and irrationality devoid of knowledge. They waste their life in vain and bar people from the path of guidance. They deviate from the path of the righteous Companions and adhere to a way other than that of believers. Whenever they see a divine light, they promptly hasten to extinguish it and consider it to be a fabricated thing. They disregard the Sunnah of guidance and fling it behind their backs. If the reality of their doings were revealed, all mankind would despise them, but complaining is only to Allah. In our time, there are no ears that listen, no humble hearts. So, if you have a piece of knowledge, take a grave for yourself. Otherwise, you will be grievously beaten and argued. In this respect, the stately are the inferior ones and innovations are rites on their part. There is neither power nor strength save in Allah. This situation cannot be changed except through Allah's

support. We do not want to speak further, those people are wicked and ignoble.[19]

**4. People view matters in two ways**

People look either towards truth or falsehood. Some people, when they see, hear, or read, make it their ultimate concern to know the truth and search for it in themselves and others. The people of this orientation pay due thanks and gratitude to people of truth and consider them as their teachers for what they have learned from them. Similarly, those people do not judge truthful people only by their slips and errors at the expense of truth and right. The people of this orientation are on the path of the prophets. A prophet can be described as a man who, by nature, was akin to truth in his sayings, deeds, and knowledge in such a way that he did not know or do anything except with truth. This is by virtue of wisdom bestowed on him by nature, not by examination or thinking, but by divine knowledge.

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[19]Imam Muhammad `Abduh, explanation of *Al-`Adudiyah*, p. 68. I will indicate certain texts and sources concerning the People of the Sunnah and Hadith that will refute doubts and admit attributes through vision, intellect, and basics of logic.

And in establishing this way, the scholars of the principles of *fiqh* say that when a *mujtahid* (one who makes independent judgments or *fatwas*) makes an error, one should neither follow him in his error nor belittle him for it.[20]

As for those whose method is to search for falsehood, error, defects, and slips, they are those who blindly disregard your truth and right and judge you only through your defects and errors at the expense of truth and right. Those people never forgive error and never see others except through their defects and faults. They deliberately expose others' mistakes. Philosopher Abu Al-Hasan Al-`Ameri said in his invaluable book *Manaqib Al-Islam*, in which he defended Islam, refuted all doubts of skeptics, and showed the merits and outstanding traits of Islam, "No one is more ignoble than those who follow the defects of good people."[21]

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[20]Ash-Shatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat*, vol. 4, pp. 170, 324. Explained and verified by Sheikh `Abdullah Diraz (Cairo: Al-Maktabah At-Tagariyah, Muhammad `Ali, undated).

[21]Philosopher Abu Al-hasan Muhammad bin Yusuf Al-`Ameri (died 381 A.H.), *Al-I`lam bi Manaqib Al-Islam*, edited by Ahmad `Abdul-Hamid Ghurab (Dar Al-Kitab Al-`Arabi, 1387 A.H./1967 A.D.), p. 110.

Some people do that, thinking—even implicitly or unconsciously—that they raise themselves by attacking and belittling others. In so doing, they think that they are scholars of criticism. Truly, they do not know that being a scholar among scholars is better than being a scholar among the ignorant and that being an outstanding figure is superior to being prominent among inferior people.

Some of these people may be zealous in their religion, but over zealous is not appreciated. Some of them have good faith, but there are many people whom I hope to call but whose testimony I do not accept.

Moreover, some of these people may make negative judgments that may go so far as to deny another's faith. But this denial is not based on a complete examination and proofs. So it is an invalid ruling by one rejected according to all criteria of knowledge and intellect.

**5. People Are of Two Kinds in Their Perception**

There are people with learning and people with insight. The former has an acquired intellect, but the latter has a talented intellect of insight and understanding.

Intellect acquired through experiments, reading, and memorization does not avail its owner and does not aid him to reach the truth if he does not have talented intellect. To know, memorize, and identify pages and numbers is nothing without insight, even if this memory holds all the treasures of books on this earth. Insight is an imparted gift and a distinctive feature of talented intellect. It is a prerequisite for examining and understanding texts. It is a criterion for preference among people, for it achieves original opinions and sound judgments.

Imam Al-Ghazali designated being insightful as one of the traits of the scholars of the Hereafter, who base on insight—not pages and books—their knowledge and understanding by clarity of their hearts.

The one who reads and memorizes without insight is not really entitled to be a scholar. He is only a receptacle. He who reads without insight to discover wisdom, secrets, and meanings of what he reads is not a true scholar.[22]

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[22]Ibn Al-Qayim, *Jala' Al-Afham*, p. 88 (Cairo: Idarat At-Tiba`ah Al-Manbaryah, Darb Al-Atrak, Al-Azhar, 1357 A.H.). Imam Abu Al-Hasan Al-Mawardi, *Adab Ad-Dunya wa Ad-Din*, 12th ed., pp. 2-3 (Al-Matba`ah Al-Amiriyah 1338 A.H./1920 A.D.). __ p. 19 (Dar Al-Kitab Al-`Arabi, edited and revised by Muhammad `Abdur-Rahman `Awad,

1406 A.H./1986 A.D.). Al-Fairuzbadi, *Basa'r Dhawi At-Tamyidh fi Lata'if Al-Kitab Al-'Aziz*, vol. 4, p. 85, verified by Sheikh Muhammad 'Ali An-Najjar (Cairo: Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs, 1383 A.H.). 'Abbas Mahmud Al-'Aqad, *Mutala'at fi Al-Kutub wa Al-Hayah*, 4th ed., p. 106 (Cairo: Dar Al-Ma'arif, 1987). Imam Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum Ad-Din*, vol. 1, p. 84 and vol. 4, pp. 87-90 (Cairo: Mustafa Al-Babi Al-Halabi, 1358 A.H./1939 A.D.)
This last book is an ocean abundant with Islamic knowledge and truths. Abu Al-Hasan An-Nadawi, in his treatise about Al-Ghazali, p. 61, said: *Ihya' 'Ulum Ad-Din* is one of the few books written on Islam that influenced to a great extent the life and thought of Muslims. This book obsessed the minds and selves of all Muslims for many centuries. Nowadays, it also has a great influence in religious circles, more than any other. Scholars and people who scrutinize texts still praise it, its status, and its effect. Al-Hafidh Al-'Iraqi, the author of *Alfiyat Mustalah Al-Hadith,* said: It is one of the most invaluable books of Islam. 'Abdul-Ghafir Al-Farisi, a contemporaneous scholar of Al-Ghazali and a student of Imam Al-Haramain, said: It is one of his famous and unprecedented works. Al-Kazaruni said: If all sciences were erased, I would deduce from *Al-Ihya'*. Imam An-Nawawi admired this book and was engrossed by it. I say, Al-'Abdusi said in his book *Ta'rif Al-Ahya' bi Fadl Al-Ihya'*: Imam An-Nawawi said: *Al-Ihya'* is almost a Qur'an. Al-Murtada Az-Zubidi explained it in twenty volumes. I say, although Ibn al-Jawzi criticized *Al-Ihya'* in his book *Talbis Iblis*, pp. 165-166, he summarized it in his book *Minhaj Al-Qasidin*. Al-Maqdisi also summarized *Minhaj Al-Qasidin* in his book, *Mukhtasar Minhaj Al-Qasidin*. Al-Hafidh Al-'Iraqi answered about Al-Ghazali saying: Most of what is mentioned in this book is not invented. I say, I heard the Grand Imam Sheikh Muhammad Mustafa Al-Maraghi, the Sheikh of Al-Azhar, say: When I went to be in charge of judiciary in Sudan, Imam Muhammad 'Abduh asked me if I had the book *Al-Ihya'*. I replied yes, and he commented, "You have all books."

Abu Talib Al-Makki said, "In our time, things are so confused that transmitters are claimed to be scholars without having understanding in religion or insight in conviction" (As-Suyuti, *Saun Al-Mantiq*, vol.1 p.175).

As-Sayuti further said:

> Malik said: Knowledge is not profuse narration, but it is a light imparted by Allah in one's heart. There is a deep chasm between the one who answers his inquirer about the reason for prohibiting *ribaa* saying, "It is prohibited by texts," and the one who says, "Islam prohibited *ribaa* for it contradicts the reality of the two cashes, gold and silver, and things do not accept a contradiction. Gold and silver are only assessors of things and not commodities, as they are considered by the usurious economic system that assigns interest in return for lending them for a time."

This was my answer to an American woman. Do not ask about her admiration and satisfaction. She also asked me—she has a singular intellect, a Ph.D., and international

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I'm very sorry for digressing in defending this book against what is blindly and frequently said by some people who despise this book and its author and annoy each other with this and also mock those who depend on it. To Allah we belong and to Him we will return.

awards—why doesn't Islam celebrate birthdays? I replied, "What merit does a birthday have? A man is born and so is a donkey!" I could have said to her, "This issue is not mentioned in any text." But which of the two answers guides the inquirer to truth and makes Islam clearer?

The Law Giver did and said what He did for underlying reasons. So, whoever confines himself to memorization will not be guided to secrets and wisdom and does not deserve to be called a scholar. He and the like are just containers, reservoirs filled with knowledge.

This is also supported by the Prophet's sayings: "The reporter may comprehend more than the listener" and "May Allah enlighten the face of one who hears my saying and holds its meaning, then transmits it as he hears it. For it may happen that a man keeps knowledge but he is not a scholar, or a man transmits knowledge to one who is more knowledgeable than him."

In addition, `Abdullah bin `Abbas, a scholar of the Prophet's family, authority of this nation, and interpreter of the Qur'an said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) summoned me and passed his hands on my forehead saying, "O Allah, teach him wisdom and interpretation of the Book

(Qur'an)." Ibn `Abbas reported less than twenty hadiths after the Prophet, but he reported after many Companions. He learned knowledge from Zaid bin Thabit and recitation of the Qur'an from Abi Ibn Ka`b and differed in opinion with them in both fields. Some imams compiled his *fatwas* in twenty volumes.[23]

The Qur'an mentions Jesus (peace be upon him) saying

> ❬*I have come to you with wisdom, and to make clear to you some of that on which you differ*❭
>
> (Az-Zukhruf, 63)

Generally, wisdom lies in the favor of the one who does something for something else. By doing this he increases the wisdom originating from his deed.[24]

Moreover, Allah the Almighty says

> ❬*And if there comes to them a matter of security or of fear, they disclose it, if they had referred it to the*

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[23]Ibn Al-Qayim, *I`lam Al-Muwaq`in*, vol. 1, p. 14; and his book *Al-Wabil As-Sayib*, p. 82.

[24]*Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din*, vol. 1, p. 84. Ibn Al-Qayim, *Al-Wabil As-Sayib*, p. 82 (At-Tiba`ah Al-Muniria). *I`lum Al-Muwaqi`in*, vol. 1, p. 9.

*Messenger and to those responsible, those capable of assessing the matter would have dealt with it...* ❳

(An-Nisa', 83)

Deduction is only applied to implicit and vague things that need a special effort to deduce them. Also, deduction is not available to everyone. This is an affirmation from the Book of Allah about the effort of intellect in seeking meanings of texts, or reports, or what the speaker means. A believer should adhere to this method in all aspects of his life. He should refer all his affairs to the people of insight and vision who are talented enough to deduce what is hidden and implicit beyond the words of the text. It is well known that this is a degree above a mere understanding of texts and words. This is not the way deduction should be done. The subject matters of words cannot be acquired by deduction, but by deducing causes, meanings, similarities, contradictions, and the objectives of the speaker.[25] In *Tarikh At-Tabari*, it is reported after Mujahid that *istanbata* (to deduce) means *tahassasa* (to search for).

[25] *I'lam Al-Muwaqi'in*, vol. 1, p. 195.

## 6. In This Way Scholars Tackled *Shari`ah*

As people differ in their understanding and method, they also differ in their understanding of *shari`ah*. Some of them adhere to the method of seeking only texts, while others adhere to the method of seeking the meaning of the texts.

Those who only seek texts are similar to the people of acquired intellect, and those who search for meaning of texts are similar to the people of talented intellect. Moreover, as the rank of people of learning is clearly different from that of people of insight, there is a corresponding difference between those who seek for texts and those who search for their meanings.

In addition, those who seek for texts confine themselves only to words and their linguistic connotations, but those who search for the meaning of texts surpass mere words to the meaning without violating the language. The former often answers you with a challenge: What is your evidence? For him, evidence is nothing but text. On the contrary, the latter who seeks the meaning of a text has a more comprehensive concept of evidence than the former. He brings texts together and searches for basic premises, purports, contexts, and reasons for the texts. He also searches for the whole under

which lie the parts and for the spirit of *shari`ah*, that is, overall meaning arising in the compiler of texts and the one who understands their meanings. The people of this method are those who are capable of exercising *ijtihad* in ever-changing circumstances of the ages. The people of text have nothing to say except, "It is not revealed or found in any text."

As for people of meaning, they are guided to what cannot be reached by those who disregard the spirit of *shari`ah* and its meanings and forget that all texts of *shari`ah* are like one piece that should not be segmented or divided. Division of its texts veils the truth and submits *shari`ah* to people's desires and fancies.

Whenever Al-Hasan (May Allah be pleased with him) mentioned Al-Hajjaj, he said, "He read the Qur'an in division and segmentation."[26]

When the people who seek for meanings and purpose hear Allah's saying ❮*eat and drink*❯, they understand that the Law Giver means permissibility, although the superficial meaning of the text is an order. Similarly, when those people hear

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[26]Al-Jahidh, *Al-Bayan wa At-Tabyin*, vol. 3, p. 468, chapter of "Statements Ascribed to Jesus" (Beirut: Maktabit At-Tulab wa Shirkit Al-Kitab Al-Libnani, March 1968).

Allah's saying ❨*do whatever you want*❩, they understand that the Law Giver means a threat, although the superficial meaning is an order. When a man wanted to distinguish one of his sons by granting him some gift and wanted the Prophet to witness this, the Prophet (peace be upon him) refused and said to him, "Let someone other than me testify to it." The people who seek only texts were compelled to agree with those who seek meanings that what the Prophet meant was a rejection of witnessing and distinguishing one son over the others, although the superficial meaning is ordering him to let others witness it.[27]

Another strange example of the people who seek only text is their *fatwa* concerning a boy who is born without a foreskin and thus in no need of circumcision. They said if there is not something else to be cut instead of a foreskin, it is recommended to pass a razor on the area of circumcision. This is what is available to do, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Whatever I order you to do, do it as long as it lies in your capacity."

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[27]The author has clarified in detail these two methods in his book *Usul Al-Manahij Al-Fiqhiyah.*

According to this hadith, two things were ordered to be done: first, cutting with a sharp object; second, as cutting is dropped, passing a razor is highly recommended. Imam Ibn Al-Qayim commented:

> The correct opinion is that this is *makruh* (detested) and cannot be counted as a rite of worship and holds *shari'ah* in disdain. It is jestful and frivolous. Passing a razor is only a means to do what is meant (cutting), so, if what is meant is dropped, the means has no meaning. Moreover, they said concerning the one who is bald that it is highly recommended for him to pass a razor on his head in performing the rites of Hajj. By the same token, later followers of Ahmad are of the opinion that if one is not able to read or say remembrances or is dumb, it is recommended for him to just move his tongue. He said: Our sheikh said: If they say *salah* (prayer) it will be invalid, for this is a foolish thing that contradicts humbleness and is an addition that is not demanded.[28]

I don't want too go far in mentioning examples. I have mentioned some in my book *Usul Al-Manahij Al-Fiqhiyah.*

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[28] Ibn Al-Qayim, *Tuhfat Al-Maudud,* p. 120.

Due to differences among people in understanding *shari`ah*, narrators and transmitters after the Prophet (peace be upon him) were both memorizers and *mujtahidun* (those who make independent legal judgements). The Prophet supplicated Allah to give Abu Hurairah a good memory and to give Ibn `Abbas understanding.

On this basis, scholars of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence decided that no one can attain the status of *mujtahid* unless he grasps all the targets of *shari`ah* and is capable of exercising deduction.[29]

Those whose method is to seek the meanings and purposes of texts are the ones who protected Islam's character and uniqueness that make it suitable for every time and place. Without exaggeration, they were the pioneers of the Islamic intellectual movement. They also laid the foundation of its unique philosophy, which is the outcome of pure Islamic thought that derived its ideas, issues, methodology, and subjects from Islam. Islamic thought was not influenced by Greek or other philosophies that were translated for Muslims

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[29]Ibn Al-Qayim, *I`lam Al-Muwaqi`in*, vol. 1, pp. 6, 191, 288. Ash-Shatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat*, vol. 4, pp. 105, 162, 179.

and which influenced those who were known as philosophers of Muslims.

The people of this method are the builders of the pyramid of pure Islamic thought represented in two principles covering all aspects of religion: scholastic theology and the principles or logic of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*).[30]

Those who call for completely avoiding scholastic theology and consider it an innovation, call, in fact, for destroying half of pure Islamic thought. If we examine closely, they even call for destroying the second half (principles of Islamic jurisprudence), for it is rational principles that are indispensable for understanding texts. In so doing, they transgress against Muslim intelligence and texts of Islam.

Those who follow the purposes method, who are the most deserving of the rank of *ijtihad*, are the jurists of Islam and *fatwa* was evolved on the basis of their statements. They are the ones who are favored with the deduction of judgments. They are the ones who designate accurately the rules of *halal*

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[30]Dr. `Ali Sami An-Nashar in his two books, *Manahij Al-Bahth `inda Mufakiri Al-Islam*, with an introduction by his student, Dr. `Abduh Ar-Rajihi, pp. 79-91; and *Nash'at Al-Fikr Al-Islami fi Al-Islam*, with an introduction by the author himself.

(lawful) and *haram* (unlawful). Their status on this earth is like that of the stars in the sky.[31]

There is a great difference between scholars of text and scholars of purposes of text. The latter, through scrutiny and examination, are able to clarify the characteristics of *shari`ah* with which they defend Islam against decadent, invalid opinions of those who claim to be the most deserving to legislate for people. There is a deep chasm between text and understanding of text, whose people are the true scholars. Imam Ath-Thawri said, "O people of hadith, learn the understanding of hadith and do not be influenced by those who said, 'On whatever Abu Hanifah said, we reported one or two hadith.' The one who reported after him said, 'They dropped him from the chain of transmission and said: On the authority of `Amr bin Dinar after who?'"[32]

### 7. Some Characteristics of the Qur'anic Style

Whoever studies the style of the Qur'an with a critical and scrutinizing eye will conclude that this great Book is distinguished by its literary and scientific rules.

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[31]*I`lam Al-Muwaqi`in*, vol. 1, pp. 7, 286-289.

[32]Al-Hakim An-Naisaburi, *Ma`rifat `Ulum Al-Hadith*, p. 66.

Undoubtedly, rhetoric is short of penetrating the Qur'an's uniqueness of style. The Qur'an came with a style unprecedented in the Arabic form of speech. In uncountable ways it does not comply with any model. It must therefore include figures of speech, metaphors, and metonymies that were unknown to Arabs.[33]

How can one be hesitant about the figurative language of the Qur'an after looking at the two books by the pioneer of rhetoric, Imam `Abdul Qahir Al- Jirjani, *Dala'il Al-I`jaz* and *Asrar Al-Balaghah*, and also at the valuable book *Talkhis Al-Baiyan fi Majaz Al-Qur'an* by Ash-Sharif Ar-Radi. I think it is enough to point out here some characteristics of the Qur'anic style pertinent to the research subject and its objective.

• It is an illustrative style, embodying the meaning, and showing it in a tangible form which makes its reader almost touch. For instance, the similitude given on monotheism and polytheism: the polytheist who worships many gods is like a slave owned by a disputatious group. Due to their

[33]Abu Al-Hassan Al-`Amiri the Philosopher, *Al-I`lam bi Minaqib Al-Islam*, the chapter "*Asalib Al-Qur'an*"; Al-Qadi `Abdul Jabar, *Al-Mughni*; Ahmad Hassan Al-Baquri, *Athr Al-Qur'an Al-Karim fi Al-Lughat Al-`Arabia*, pp. 125-126.

contentious manners and ill nature, they draw him forth and use him for their diversified goals while he is bewildered whom to depend on and whom to satisfy by his service. On the contrary, the monotheist is like a man entirely owned by only one man, as nobody else has anything to do with him. He serves him sincerely, as he is free of any bewilderment and torn heart. Which of the two is better? (Az-Zumar, 29).

We also have the likeness of the polytheist in Surat Al-Hajj:

> ❴*Whoever associates anything with Allah, it is as if he had fallen from heaven and been snatched up by birds, or the wind had swept him into a far distant place.*❵
>
> (Al-Hajj, 31)

This means that whoever associates anything with Allah falls from the stronghold of belief, vulnerable to disputable desires and misguidance, and makes himself subject to the ugliest form of death, falling from the sky in shreds snatched by the birds, so nothing is left of him. Or he is stormed by a furious wind hurling him to a place away from any hope of deliverance.

This similitude can be considered a compound one, likening the one associating with Allah in worship in his overall form to the previous example in its generality without comparing

every part of the figure and state of the polytheist with each part of the figure in the similitude. It can be divided, each element of similitude being compared. Accordingly, monotheism is likened to the sky in its altitude, broadness, and honor; whereas the one who abandons monotheism is likened to one falling from the sky to the lowest point. The birds which snatch his organs and shred him into pieces are the devils buzzing around him, for every devil has a slice of his religion and heart, as every bird has a piece of his flesh and organs. And the wind that hurls him is the misguidance and doubts carrying him away from salvation.

Hence, when the Qur'an speaks about Allah with His attributes to be in the sky or heaven, there is no harm for anyone to understand it as a portrayal of Allah's rank—exalted be He—especially when it is to defend the faith, turn away the denial of the atheists, and refute their doubts. In the introduction of his book, *Usul At-Tafsir* Ibn Taimiyah said, "Knowledge is either transmission authenticated by an infallible person or a saying that has a proof. Those who interpreted the text "in the sky" did not base their saying on something revealed but asserted it by transmission and reason."

• Another characteristic of the Qur'anic style is that Allah the Exalted addresses people according to their limited faculties, particularly concerning the unseen matters, and more especially divine matters, since no human being can comprehend their essences or image them. For that, Allah gave abundant examples. If the human capability is too weak to comprehend the essence of things that are known to him by senses, then the soundest way to define them is through their attributes and tangible effects. So, what about the unseen as related to the Divinity and the Hereafter? Ibn `Abbas said, "Paradise has no resemblance to worldly life except in the names of things."

Scholars of hadith and sunnah, even the literalists, acknowledged such a Qur'anic characteristic in both the Qur'an and hadith. Imam Al-Bukhari said in his *Sahih*, the chapter, "If one likens a known essence with another..." that Allah has shown its provision to make the questioner understand.[34] Some of these texts are quoted along with the

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[34]*Sahih Al-Bukhari*, the chapter "If one likens a known essence..." See also *Fath Al-Bari*, vol. 1, p. 128. In the hadith about the three who went to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) while he was sitting, there are utterances, "Allah gave him shelter" and "Allah turned away." The use of these is to explain a thing in a clear way. Another hadith says, "Allah accepts the alms with His right (hand) and

He augments them." In *Al-Fath*, vol. 3, p. 217, Imam Al-Mazri says, "This hadith and its similitude express what they used to say in their speech to be understood. So 'with the right' is a metaphoric expression for accepting the alms, and 'augmentation' for multiplying the reward.'" `Ayad said, "The thing that was satisfactory was given by the right hand and taken by it, as used in this example and metaphorically used for denoting acceptance, as in the saying 'He received it by the right', i.e. when he was qualified for glory and honor, and not meaning the right hand." It was said that the right denoted acceptance while the left was the opposite. It was said that it was the right hand that paid the alms, and it was attributed to Allah for dominion and authority. It was said that the purpose was the quickness of acceptance; and it was said the reward. Az-Zain Al-Munir said that it is a metonymy for consent and acceptance through the receiving with the right to emphasize the meanings grasped in the minds and realizing them in the selves like the tangible things. That is to say, not to doubt the acceptance like not doubting when one observes the receiving of a thing by the right. *Al-Fath*, vol. 13, p. 252 commented on Bukhari's "If one likens a known essence..." saying that the benefit of the similitude is to draw the meaning closer to the questioner's understanding. An-Nissa'i transmitted it with the following wording: "If one likens a known essence with another vague, Allah has shown its provision to make the questioner understand." In *Al-Fath,* chapter by Ibn Hazm, vol. 2, p. 357, the section on Allah's saying *(For I created with My Hands)*, many comments and interpretations were mentioned on this. Other than Ibn Furk said, "This is used in the course of likeness for proximity, for it is known that whoever takes care of something and is concerned about it, undertakes it with his hands; the same for the care in Adam's creation; it was more perfect than the creation of anything else." Al-Hafidh said, "The hand lexically is used for many meanings. Twenty-five meanings, actual and figurative, are known to us." (They are mentioned). In the same section, vol. 13, p. 339, at the Jew's saying,

footnotes of *Mausu`ah Al-Hadith wa `Ulumahu* to make one feel reassured when scholastic theologians consider some of what is related to Allah's Self and Attributes expressed in a way accordant with human abilities. I will add to this point later on by referring to some interpretations of the scholars of hadith and sunnah.

• Among the characteristics of the Qur'anic style is that it addresses people according to the custom of the language in which it was sent down. This is admitted of the sayings of the people of hadith. We will be making a grave mistake if we do not pay attention to this characteristic and depend only on the apparent meaning of an utterance. If we take the apparent meaning of the words in His saying ❮*There is nothing like Him*❯ (Ash-Shura, 11) then we will be admitting a likeness to Allah, since the Arabic literally means there is not anything as His like. Then it will be a negation of the like. However, the like is fixed (Exalted be Allah), but the expert of lexicography and linguistics and the secrets of Arabic will know that the Arabs speak about the like and do not mean but what is added to it. Hence they say,

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"O Abu Qasim, verily Allah holds heavens on a finger." The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) smiled at that.

I did not say "like you" meaning "other than you",
O you person with no similar

• Yet another characteristic of the Qur'anic style is its endless gift of signification of its utterances, their uniqueness, lexical construction, the natural order of terms, lexical hints, and the construction and signs of utterances. Then come the generalities of Qur'an in its comprehensiveness of everything described by its signification. Whenever the predecessors identified a certain person being alluded to in the general signification, it remains applicable to him and also is general. For instance, the predecessors said that a certain verse was sent relevant to so-and-so, like the reason for revelation mentioned in the commentaries. Here are some examples: the verse of *az-zihar* verse (the husband swearing that his wife be as his mother's back) was sent down pertaining to the wife of Aus bin As-Samet. The verse of *al-la'an* (oath of condemnation, disavowal of paternity by mutual oath of both spouses) related to `Umair bin Al-`Ajlan or Hilal bin Umaiya. The verse of *kalalah* (one who has no parents or children left) related to Jabir bin `Abdullah. Allah's saying ❮*And you should judge between them by what Allah has revealed*❯ (Al-Ma'idah, 49) was sent down concerning Banu Quraidhah and An-Nudir. Abu Aiyub said that His saying, ❮*and do not cast*

*yourselves to ruin by your own hands*} (Al-Baqarah, 195) was sent down on the Ansar. All those who said so did not mean that the provisions of the verses were sent to those people only, for this cannot be said by a Muslim or a reasonable person under any conditions.[35]

The Qur'an, with all its treasures of expressions and their structure, the way of construction, its generalities, absoluteness and entirety, is continuously giving, as it does not exclude anyone but encompasses all. Thus as narrated by Ahmad, the Prophet described it saying, "Its wonders do not perish." Allah commanded the believers in all periods to refer to Allah and His Messenger if they have a dispute. Referring to Allah is to refer to His Book, whereas referring to the Messenger is to refer to him in his lifetime and so to his sunnah after his death. If the Qur'an and sunnah did not have a provision or judgment for every new matter, this command would have been considered impossible to fulfill.

According to Al-Hafidh Ibn Kathir, the authentic commentaries (*tafsir*) transmitted by the predecessors on the

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[35]Ibn Taimiyah, introduction of *Usul At-tafsir*, 4th ed., vol. 12, p. 13 (Salafayia, Roda, Cairo). He said on page14, "It was sent down for so-and-so, meaning one time the reason for revelation, and another time meaning that it was within the verse, not as a reason for revelation."

authority of the Prophet and the Companions are few, while there are plenty of *tafsir al-ma'thur* (commentaries depending on traditions) provided by narrators who were unbelieving Jews, Persians, and Muslims from the People of the Book (i.e. originally Jewish or Christian). Thus, Imam Ahmad said, "Three have no root: commentary (*tafsir*), battles, and military expeditions. This is because they are overwhelmed with incompletely transmitted (*mursal*) hadiths. [i.e., the chain of transmission goes back no farther than the second generation after the Prophet]."

Ibn Taimiyah, in the introduction of *Usul At-Tafsir*, did not confirm what was narrated on the authority of the Companions, saying, "The self is more at ease with what is transmitted on the authority of *At-Tabi`un* (successors of the Companions)." This contradicts those who derive a judgment according to what a Companion says without proof or transmission and treat it like a *hadith marfu`* (traceable in ascending order to the Prophet). Some of the Companions narrated from the people of the Book, even from Ka`b Al-Ahbar, about whom Al-Bukhari narrated that Mu`awiya said, "We find that he lies." Among them were Abu Huraira and Ibn `Abbas. There were among the Companions those who narrated on the authority of *Tabi`un*, who in their turn narrated from the People of the Book. Indeed, all the reports

about the Unseen of the past, future, and the like that are known only by transmission from the infallible are not acceptable as proof unless they are through an authentic chain of transmission traceable to the Prophet (peace be upon him). This is Imam Ibn Jarir's rule, which he frequently professed.[36] Therefore, our aim out of all this is as Imam Muhammad `Abduh said:

> Most of what was narrated in *At-Tafsir Al-Ma'thur* (commentary depending on traditions)—or much of it—is a curtain on the Qur'an, diverting its reader from its high purposes that purify the souls and lighten the minds. Those who prefer *At-Tafsir Al-Ma'thur* are distracted with things away from the purposes of the Qur'an by the many narrations which have no value with regards to their chain of Unseen of the past, future and the like narration or subject.

• Allah ordered people to contemplate (*tadabbara*) the Qur'an. The word *tadabbara* in Arabic is derived from *dubur*, which is the back, so *tadabbra al-amr*, meaning to contemplate the matter, is to look through its back, not to

[36]Sheikh Rashid Rida, *Muqadimat Tafsir Al-Imam Muhammad `Abduh*, 2nd ed. Pp. 8-10. (Mutaba`at Al-Manar, 1366 A.H.).

stop at its beginning. With this meaning, to contemplate the Qur'an is not to stop at merely the appearance. One of the most instrumental means of such contemplation is the gifted insight, which distinguishes its possessor from the one who depends on acquisition.

The meaning of contemplation and its insight is that one is guided through the Qur'an to what those who preceded him had not been guided to. It also denotes the ceaseless gift of the Qur'an. Furthermore, it means that the Qur'an does not stop at a certain period of time or at one saying. Az-Zamakhshari said, "To contemplate the Qur'an is to reflect on and deliberate its meanings." An-Nisfi said, "Don't they reflect on its meanings and evidence?" To contemplate is to reflect on and ponder over the back of a matter and its interpretations reached at the end and then used in every reflection. Thinking over (*tafakkur*) is the act of the heart that looks into the evidence and proofs. This refutes the Rafidite allegation that the meanings of the Qur'an are understood only through the commentary of the Messenger (peace be upon him) and the infallible imam.

To stop our understanding of the Qur'an at the predecessors' understanding carries all the dangers which prevail in Islam,

Muslims, and the Qur'an, and accords with the Rafidites allegations.

Because of this Qur'anic characteristic resembling a continuous gift, Allah has linked the Qur'an and evolving science with Allah's universal signs concealed in the selves and on the horizons. For the Qur'an and its contents conform to such signs of the universe discovered all through the ages, things not known to the early predecessors. If all the implications of the Qur'an had been known to the predecessors, this saying of Allah's would not be true:

> ❨*We shall show them Our Signs on the furthest horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth.*❩
>
> (Fussilat, 53).

This verse corresponds with

> ❨*And say: "Praise be to Allah, He will show you His Signs and you will recognize them*❩
>
> (An-Naml, 93).

If the signs of Allah in the selves and on the horizons are evolving—discovering today what was not there yesterday and discovering tomorrow what was not there today—the

same is true for the Qur'anic verses, as the Qur'an corresponds to the universe.[37]

Because of the evolving gift of the Qur'an, scholars said that commentary is through three bases: a linguistic commentary to which the modern writers resort; a commentary of meaning, which is provided by the predecessors (*salaf*); and a commentary of symbol and analogy. Ibn Al-Qayim said in his book *Aqsam Al-Qur'an*,

> There is no objection to it if it meets four conditions: it should not contradict the meaning of the verse, it should be a correct meaning in itself, the utterance should have information about it, and there should be connection and correlation. If these four items are combined, then it is a good conclusion.

His mentor, The Shiekh of Islam [Ibn Taimiyah], in his commentary on Surat An-Nur, commented on the Sufi interpretation of Allah's saying ❮*Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth*❯ (An-Nur, 35). One of the views of the *`Arifun* (Gnostics) is "Light is that which lightened the

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[37]The author has a treatise entitled *Al-`Ilm wa Al-Iman* in which he explains the harmony of the Qur'an and the universe from ten aspects mentioned in the Qur'an.

hearts of the *`Arifun* through His Oneness and the light of the lover's secrets through His support. It is that which vivified the hearts of the `Arifun with the light of knowing Him and the souls of the worshipers with the light of His worshiping." The Shiekh of Islam said:

> The word "*`Arifun*" has an influence in the hearts... The signs of the Sufis are divided into: present signs; heart signs, with which they are characterized; verbal signs, such as they derive from the Qur'an. Such signs are for consideration and analogy. Thus, if the sign is a kind of authentic analogy, then it is good and acceptable, while if the analogy is weak, then it should have wisdom. Yet, if it is a deviation away from its interpretation, then it is like the sayings of the Karmathians, Batanians, and Jahamians [deviant sects]. Contemplate this.[38]

It is well known that the heart signs, spiritual sentiments, soul yearnings, and their serenity through the continual advances to Allah, as inspired by verbal signs, are all limitless in time, space, and personality. It is rather a gift of

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[38]Ibn Taimiyah, *Tafsir Surat An-Nur*, 2nd. ed., pp. 130-131 (Egypt: At-Tabia`ah Al-Muniriya, 1358 A.H.)

the Generous Bestower, Eliminator of ailments, and Exterminator of obstacles. This is the grace of Allah that He brings to whomever He decides.

• Among the characteristics of the Qur'an, as well as the hadith, is that its decrees are linked to their reasons. The decree goes along with the reason whether the latter is there or not. The absence or nonexistence of the reason does not invalidate the text.[39] For instance, as narrated on the authority of 'Umar, he did not cut off the hand of the thief in the famine year. This is not an invalidation of the text by opinion, as alleged today by secularists who aim to abandon *shar'iah* decrees and adopt laws according to opinion. 'Umar did so because his understanding of *shar'iah* linked the decree with its cause or reason. If the cause is absent, then the effect is absent too. As long as 'Umar did not amputate, it meant that the reason for amputating did not exist. In logic, proving the antecedent necessitates proving the consequent, and refuting the consequent necessitates refuting the antecedent. The proposition of inseparableness is the absence

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[39]Imam Ash-Shafi'i, *Ar-Risalah*, Bulaq ed., p. 34 (1321 A.H.); Imam An-Nawawi, *Al-Majmu' bi Sharh Al-Mahdhib*, vol. 8, p. 395 (Jeddah: Makkat Al-Irshad). Verified, commented on and completed by Sheikh Muhammad Najib Al-Muti'i; An-Nawawi, *Sharh Muslim*, vol. 13, p. 129; *Fath Al-Bari bi Sharh Al-Bukhari*, vol. 10, p. 23.

of the bound for the absence of the binding. If a decree is proved to be linked to a cause, it is cancelled with its cancellation; this is known as the reversal of the cause in the science of the principles of jurisprudence.[40]

Because of this characteristic, the scholars resorted to the fourth (the rational) of the legislative sources, namely, analogy. The sound analogy is accepted by scholars.[41] This means that rational or legal justification is admitted by the scholars of both the principles [scholastic theology] and branches [*usul al-fiqh*]. They refer to Islam's dependence on reason, as its faith is founded on facts. There is no wrong for a Muslim to present his religion in a rational way or to defend it with rational evidence and scientific facts, for this is the style of the present time. We are now in a new scholastic theology, taking from psychology, sociology, and applied sciences to reinforce the old theology. In this method the Muslim is neither an innovator nor a deviant from the

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[40]Ibn Taimiyah, *Mukhtasar Fatawi Ibn Taimiyah.* Abridgement by Sheikh Badr Ad-Din Abi `Abdullah Muhammad `Ali Al-Hanbali (d. 777 A.H.). Supervised by Sheikh `Abdul Majid Salim (Matba`ah As-Sunnah Al-Muhammadia, 1368 A.H./1949 A.D.).

[41]*Fath Al-Bari*, vol. 13, p. 253; Imam Al-Ghazali, *Al-Mustafa min `Ilm Al-Usul*, vol. 2, p. 98 (Maktaba At-Tijariyah, 1356 A.H./1937 A.D.).

text, but rather he bolsters the texts with scientific facts, which Islam calls us to refer to, considering them signs of Allah.

### 8. Interpretable Qur'anic Verses and Prophetic Hadiths

Interpretation in this domain is not restricted to scholars of discernment and scholastic theologians. Jurists and scholars of Prophetic hadith have also contributed to this field and adopted interpretation when they dealt with the science of the principles of jurisprudence. Actually, our righteous predecessors (*As-Salaf* ) and later scholars (*Al-Khalaf*) all agreed upon the use of interpretation.

### Example of interpretation adopted by jurists

(1) Imam Muslim reported on the authority of Jabir that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Only a two-year-old head of cattle or camel can fit as a sacrificial animal. If you cannot afford a two-year-old head of cattle or camel, you may offer a one-year-old sheep as a sacrificial animal." According to the surface meaning of this hadith, a one-year-old sheep does not fit as a sacrificial animal except

in the absence of two-year-old cattle or camel, which is called *thaniyyah*.[44]

However, scholars have interpreted this surface meaning to indicate that the better, superior, and more desirable action is to offer two-year-old cattle, camel, and even sheep as sacrificial animals rather than younger ones. It is also reported that the judgment agreed upon by the majority of scholars does not follow the surface meaning of the hadith.[45]

(2) Clarifying the concept of prevention (*hasr*) [of completing the rituals] during the Hajj, Ibn `Abbas said, "The prevention that should be taken into consideration is that imposed by the enemies." Other hadiths, however, demonstrate that prevention by falling ill is also taken into consideration. Therefore, scholars interpreted that Ibn `Abbas's saying concerns those who did not stipulate to break the state of *ihram* (consecration) in case of falling ill.

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[44]The term *thaniyyah* refers to five-year-old camels, two-year-old cows and bulls, and one-year-old sheep or younger, provided that its front teeth have fallen. The term also refers to two-year-old goats, but the Hanafi and Malaki jurists say it is only the one-year-old goat.

[45]See An-Nawawi's *Al-Majmu`*, vol. 8, p. 367 and his *Sharh Sahih Muslim*, vol. 13, p. 117.

It is reported on the authority of `Ikrimah that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "If anyone breaks his leg or becomes lame during the performance of Hajj, he has to break the state of *ihram* and repeat his Hajj in the next year." Al-Baihaqi reported that some scholars interpreted this hadith to mean that anyone who breaks his leg or becomes lame should break the state of *ihram* as is the case of one who breaks his Hajj for reasons other than falling ill. In other words, he does not break the state of *ihram* as soon as he breaks his leg or becomes lame, as might be indicated by the surface meaning of the hadith. Imam An-Nawawi said, "The interpretation reported by Al-Baihaqi is possible. Yet, the interpretation most known from the writings of our predecessors is that one may break the state of *ihram* if he has previously stipulated to do so in case of breaking his leg or becoming lame."

Setting the rule governing the topic of interpretation, Al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar said:

> It is not permitted to have diversity over fixed texts. As for scholar's diverse interpretations of texts and conclusions for issues subject to analogy, they are of lesser impact than having diverse opinion concerning fixed texts. If a certain group which is qualified to

conduct analogy concludes differently from others, each party is permitted to apply what it has reached, but neither of them is required to follow the rulings set through the other's way of analogy.

In the above lines, we spoke about scholar's interpretation in minor issues. Now, it is time to ask: Haven't scholars applied interpretation in issues related to the principles of faith? Broadly speaking, *Al-Muhkam* and *Al-Mutashabih* in the principles of faith are explained as follows: *Al-Muhkam* (that of established meaning) is that having only linguistic meaning. *Al-Mutashabih* (that which is not entirely clear) is that which may have various explanations and therefore needs careful consideration. This category includes Qur'anic verses telling about the attributes of Allah such as ❴*Allah Most Gracious is established on the Throne*❵ (Ta-Ha, 5); ❴*Everything will perish save His Face*❵ (Al-Qasas, 88); ❴*...in order that you may be brought up under My Eye*❵ (Ta-Ha, 39); ❴*The Hand of Allah is over their hands*❵ (Al-Fath, 10); ❴*and the heavens will be rolled up in His right hand*❵ (Az-Zumar, 67). Prophetic hadiths telling about the attributes of Allah are also included in this category.[46] This was also

[46]Sheikh Hasanain Makhluf in the introduction of his book of *Tafsir* (United Arab Emirates, 1401 A.H.).

verified by Al-Ghazali in his definition of *al-muhkam* and *al-mutashabih*, and An-Nawawi reported this on the authority of Al-Ghazali.[47]

Now, can we say that this interpretation related to the attributes of Allah is limited only to scholastic theologians and that scholars of Prophetic hadith have contributed nothing to it?

In his *Daf` Shubhat At-Tashbih*, Abu Al-Faraj Al-Jauzi Al-Hanbali reported that scholars of interpretation explained the Qur'anic verse ❬*everything will perish save His Face*❭ to mean what will abide forever is your Lord Himself. They have also said that the verse ❬*seeking His Face*❭ means seeking Him. Further, Ad-Dahhak and Abu `Ubaidah said that ❬*everything will perish save His Face*❭ means that everything will come to an end except Allah Himself. All these interpretations can be found in various books of interpretation (*tafsir*).

Abu Al-Faraj dedicated a chapter at the beginning of his book to refuting the allegation that acting upon the surface

[47] An-Nawawi, *Sharh Muslim*, vol. 16, p. 217. See also Al-Ghazali, *Al-Mustasfi*, in which he says, "Ash-Shawkani reported that in his *Irshad Al-Fuhul*," vol. 1, p. 32.

meaning of these Qur'anic verses and Prophetic hadith is the school (*madhhab*) of the righteous predecessors (*Salaf*).

In several places inhis masterpiece *Fath Al-Bari*, Imam Al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar Al-`Asqalani reported various interpretations of the surface meanings of Prophetic hadith telling about the attributes of Allah. Among these interpretations are the following:

(1) It is reported that three persons attended a session with the Prophet and his Companions. One of the three sat down at the rear of the gathering and another turned away. Upon this the Prophet said, "He (the first man) has shown humbleness to Allah and Allah has done the same with him. But the other has turned away from Allah and Allah has also turned away from him." Ibn Hajar reported that Allah's humbleness with the first man is represented in His mercy to him. Likewise, Allah's turning away is interpreted to be His wrath befalling the other person. Ibn Hajar also said that attributing an action such as turning away and similar meanings to Allah could occur only as an allegory or simile with the purpose of clarifying a hidden meaning. Therefore, such meanings should be interpreted in the way most suitable to tell about the Glorious Allah, and the benefit of this is to

explain things clearly to make them comprehensible to us. (See *Fath Al-Bari*, vol. 3, p. 128.)

(2) It is reported that charity given to people who are able to work and earn a living is accepted, as the Prophet said, "Allah receives it with His Right Hand and augments it." Ibn Hajar reported that this hadith and its like make the concept easy and intelligible. The right hand represents Allah's acceptance of charity and reflects His satisfaction with the deed, while augmenting it refers to giving double reward for it. Metaphors aim to impart these meanings to people and illustrate them as concrete objects (*Al-Fath*, vol. 3, p. 217).

In his *Sharh Sahih Muslim*, Imam An-Nawawi reported similar interpretations on the authority of scholars of Prophetic hadith. These interpretations include the following:

(1) In a hadith the Prophet is reported to have said, "If one longs for the meeting with Allah, Allah likes to meet with him. But if one does not like to meet with Allah, Allah does not like to meet with him." Imam An-Nawawi said that the meaning of "Allah likes to meet with him" represents giving more favors, blessings, and rewards to that person. On the other hand, the meaning of "Allah does not like to meet with

him" is reflected in banishing him from mercy and blessings (See An-Nawawi's *Sharh Muslim*, vol. 17, p. 10).

(2) Explaining a hadith telling about Allah's joy with His servants' repentance, Imam An-Nawawi reported that scholars interpreted Allah's joy to be His satisfaction. Al-Mazri said, "Joy can mean satisfaction with the object or action causing happiness. This hadith imparts that Allah becomes satisfied with His servants' repentance. Thus joy is used for satisfaction to assure the meaning." (See An-Nawawi's *Sharh Muslim*, vol. 17, pp. 60-61. See also *Fath Al-Bari*, vol. 4 p. 84).

The Imam of the People of the Sunnah, Ahmad, (May Allah be pleased with him) interpreted the following three Prophetic hadiths:

- Concerning the hadith "The Black Stone represents Allah's Right Hand on earth," Imam Ahmad said that it reflects the honor, glory, and high esteem of the Black Stone.

- Interpreting the hadith "The heart of a believer lies between two fingers of the Most Merciful, "Imam Ahmad said that it means Allah's Might to turn over and manage all affairs of the believers. He proved this interpretation by the fact that the Messenger used to swear by Allah saying, "By

Him Who turns over the heart." Another demonstration of this is the oft-repeated supplication, "O Allah Who has might to turn hearts, make my heart hold fast to Your true religion!"

- In regard to the hadith "I feel the breath of Allah as coming from the direction of Yemen,"[48] Imam Ahmad said that the Prophet praised the people of Yemen for accepting the way of Allah.

Imam Ibn Al-Qayim also interpreted the Qur'anic verse ❮*Our Hands have made*❯ to be more allegorical than the verse ❮*Created with My Hands*❯, since one can understand "Our Hands have made" in the same way he understands sentences like "We have made" and "We have created." The same meaning can also be found in the verse ❮*because of what your hands have gained*❯.

Al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar agreed with Ibn Al-Qayim that the verse ❮*created with My Hands*❯ is less allegorical than the verse

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[48]Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, *Al-Ihya'*, vol. 1, p. 108. There are some other interpretations attributed to Imam Ahmad, such as those included in his *Risalat Ar-Rad `ala Az-Zanadiqah*, p. 43. Ibn Hazm, in *Al-Fasl*, vol. 2, p. 318, reported Imam Ahamd's interpretation of the Qur'anic verse ❮*and your Lord came*❯ to mean the decree of your Lord came.

❨*Our Hands have made*❩. Ibn Hajar reported this on the authority of Ibn Battal and Ibn Furk in *Al-Fath,* vol. 13 under the chapter on the verse ❨*... to that which I have created with My Hands*❩. This verse is interpreted in *Safwat At-Tafasir* to mean "to that which I have created Myself." Meanwhile, it is mentioned in Al-Qurtubi that creation is attributed to Allah Himself to give a sense of honor, so He talked to people with what they know.

In his *Sharh Kitab At-Tawhid,* Al-Hafidh reported various interpretations concluded by the scholars of hadith on the words telling about the attributes of Allah. Among them are:

(1) Ibn Battal said that Allah's Mercy refers to His wish to bestow blessings upon those destined to receive them. As for the mercy put in the hearts of people, it is an attribute created by Allah to enable people to show tender behavior when dealing with others, and He is high above human attributes. Therefore, words telling about Allah should be interpreted in the way that best suits the divine Entity. (vol. 13, p. 306, chapter on the verse ❨*Say: "Invoke the Most Merciful."*❩

(2) Ibn Al-Qayim said that the attributes Most Gracious, Most Merciful (*Ar-Rahman, Ar-Rahim*) are derived from the word "mercy" (*ar-rahamah*). It is also said that both

attributes can be traced back to Allah's will to reflect the blessing of whoever enjoys His mercy. However, it is also said that both attributes can be traced back to Allah's not applying punishment. (*ibid.*)

(3) Al-Hulaini said that mercy comes for a mixture of reasons. (*ibid.*)

(4) Al-Khattabi said, The word "merciful" is derived from "mercy" and The Merciful is the One Compassionate and Full of Mercy. Ibn `Abbas said, "The Merciful and The Compassionate are both gentle attributes of Allah, and one is gentler than the other."

In his commentary on Ibn `Abbas' words, Al- Khattabi said that gentleness (*riqah*) should not be attributed to the divine Entity. Rather, The Merciful and The Compassionate reflect the kindness of Allah. Reviewing Ibn `Abbas' statement, Al-Hafidh reported on the authority of Al-Baihaqi that Al-Husain Ibn Al-Fadl said that a misspelling has occurred in Ibn ` Abbas' words, for it is *Al-Rafiq* (The Kind) and not *Al-Raqiq* (The Gentle).

(5) It is reported that Al-Hulaimi said that one who testifies naturally that there is no god but the One Who gives life and death to all creatures is not considered a true believer unless

he declares His explicit name that has no interpretation. (*ibid*, p. 307).

- In his interpretation of the verse ❮*Everything will perish save His Face*❯, Mujahid, who learned interpretation at the hands of Ibn 'Abbas, the Imam of the Interpreters, said, "Everything will perish except what is made for the sake of Allah."

- Ibn Jarir, quoted the following poetic verse in support of Mujahid's interpretation of the above Qur'anic verse:

  Allah's refuge do I seek for my grave misdeed.
  But He is High, Lord of All, To His Face all should fall.

- Ibn Kathir stated, "The verse ❮*save His Face*❯ reflects the fact that Allah is the Only One, the Eternal and Self-Subsisting. All creatures die, perish, and come to an end, but He remains the Ever-Living. The word "face" represents His entire Entity, so that the verse can be interpreted as 'except Himself.'" This meaning is asserted in a hadith reporting the Prophet to have accepted the poetry of Lubaid in which he says:

  Behold! Everything will see an end ,
  Except Allah, Who has no end.

▪ Abu `Ubaidah Ma`mar bin Al-Muthanna, author of *Majaz Al-Qur'an*, maintained that ❮*save His Face*❯ means except Himself. The same meaning has also been reported by Ibn Jarir At-Tabari on the authority of scholars of Arabic, and it was mentioned by Al- Fara'.

▪ Ibn Al-Qayim reported that Abu `Ubaidah maintained that ❮*save His Face* ❯ means His splendor and glory. However, it is further claimed that this phrase connotes the divine Entity on the analogy that when one says, "May Allah honor your face," he actually means, "May Allah hold you in high honor. (*Al-Fath*, vol. 8, p. 410 and vol. 13, p. 331).

▪ In his interpretation of the verse ❮*You know what is in my inner-self, though I do not know what is in Yours*❯ (Al-Ma'idah, 116), Ar-Raghib Al-Asfahani, author of *Mufradat Al-Qur'an,* said that the word "Yours" means Yourself. (See Ibn Hazm, *Al-Fasl*, vol. 2, p. 357.)

▪ In his interpretation of the verse ❮*if this is the Truth from You*❯ (Al-Anfal, 32), Ar-Raghib said that it means from Your authority.

▪ Again, with regard to the verse ❮*save His Face*❯, Ar-Raghib said that the word "Face" may refer to the divine Entity on the analogy that when one says, "May Allah honor

your face," he actually means, "May Allah hold you high in honor." Some scholars have also said that this verse can be interpreted to mean everything will come to an end except Allah Himself. Further, the word "Face" may refer to the intention, and the meaning in this case would be everything will come to an end except what is made with the intention of seeking Allah's rewards. (*Al-Fath*, vol. 13, pp. 331-332.)

- Supporting the view that the word "Face" refers to the divine Entity, Ar-Raghib gave a similar example. He said the word "Eye" in the verse ❬*floating under Our Eyes*❭ (Al-Qamar,14) refers to the eye as an organ. This is demonstrated by another verse, ❬*But construct the ship under Our Eyes*❭ (Hud, 37), meaning under Our care and special instructions. Al-Hafidh interpreted "under Our Eyes" to mean as We know since antiquity.

To conclude this section on interpretation, we refer to what is mentioned in *Sahih Al-Bukhari* in this regard:

- In his interpretation of the same verse ❬*everything will perish save His Face*❭, Al-Bukhari said that "His Face" refers either to His dominion or, as it is expressed above, to that which is made for His sake.

- In the Book of Tawhid (Monotheism), Imam Al-Bukhari included a chapter entitled "What Is Reported on the Entity, Attributes and Names of Allah," As the word "entity" is commonly used by scholastic theologians, Ibn Hazm prohibited using the words "entity", "attribute", or "charactetistic" when telling about Allah. However, Al-Bukhari's usage of such words is good evidence for the permission to use them.

In his commentary on the chapter title given above by Al-Bukhari, Al- Hafidh said, "This chapter tells about the entity and attributes of Allah. It also tells whether it is permitted to report about the entity and attributes of Allah on analogy of telling about His names, or whether it is forbidden due to lack of references verifying this case. Al-Bukhari's usage of the word "entity" demonstrates its reference to the Essence. The same meaning is concluded by scholastic theologians.

In his *At-Tahdhib*, Imam An-Nawawi commented on the jurists' discussion on swearing by any attribute of Allah. He said, "Jurists used the word 'Entity' to indicate the essence and reality which have been concluded by scholastic theologians. Some scholars, however, denied that 'Entity' means essence and reality, but this denial is groundless." (See *Fath Al-Bari*, vol. 13, pp. 325-326.)

Al-Hafidh frequently reported Ibn Battal's interpretation of the words "face", "hand", and "eye" to be attributes of the Entity. (*Al-Fath*, vol., 13, p. 231.) Likewise, Ibn Battal is reported to have interpreted Allah's might as an attribute of the divine Entity. (*Al-Fath*, vol. 13, p. 320.)

In his *Al-I'tiqad* (p. 35), Al-Baihaqi commented on the hadith "Your Lord is not one-eyed" saying that this hadith denies that Allah is one-eyed and that His Eye is an attribute of the Entity. The verse ❮*nothing resembles Him*❯ and other reasonable demonstrations prove that Allah's eye, hands, and face are not like those of human beings. Rather, they are attributes of the Entity and proven by texts from the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah without analogy.

The above discussion is meant to refute the opinions against interpretation. We have proved that jurists, scholars of hadith, and theologians have not only approved interpretation but also acted upon it and used some of the terms without embarrassment and without being accused of sin, and they were open-minded.

Unfortunately, some people deny interpretation, reject its application, and oppose the views of great scholars of interpretation, depicting them as devils. It is a pity that these

people did not use the references of the predecessors and are incapable of taking such a step as taken by the great figures. They only read a few words in some booklets, which they then repeat. If you ever warn them, they take no heed; if you remind them, they don't comply.

> ❬*And when they are reminded, they take no heed. And when they see a Sign, they make ridicule of it*❭
> (As-Saffat, 13-14)

To set the question more clearly, the following is a group of hadiths that include some attributes given to Allah by way of metaphor:

- In *Sahih Muslim*, the Prophet is reported to have said, "Do not curse Time (of misfortune), for Allah is the Lord of Time (of misfortune)." We, no doubt, refuse the surface meaning of this hadith and agree that Time is not one of the names of Allah.

- In his Al-Jami` As-Saghir, Imam As-Sayuti reported the Prophet to have said, "Let him (a sick person) moan, for moaning is one of the names of Allah by which the sick takes comfort." Is it reasonable that the Prophet meant the surface meaning of this hadith? Definitely not.

In interpretation of the first hadith, scholars claimed that it means that Allah is the One Who causes fortunes and misfortunes. Therefore cursing Time (of misfortune) leads to cursing Allah Himself. Concerning the second hadith, moaning is interpreted to be the effect of Almighty Allah's subjugation (of the sick).[49]

**9. Can Various Interpretations of the Same Text All Be Correct?**

Applying interpretation raises this question: Can various interpretations of the same text be correct at the same time? This may be based on the fact that interpretation may be in many directions, as seen in the above section. Due to the fact that principles of jurisprudence is a science depending on *ijtihad* (individual judgment), scholars of this field have tackled this question. Some of them ascertained that correct interpretation is one and can never be manifold, and that *mujtahidun* (those who conduct individual judgment) are of one category only. Among the scholars of this opinion is Imam Abu Ishaq Al-Isfrayini, who said, "Saying that every

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[49]Abu Dawud and Ahmad issued: "The most evil people stay on earth despised by Allah's Self." See *Lisan Al-`Arab* under "*qadhara*" and "*rama*".

*mujtahid* concludes correct and sound jugdments starts with sophistry and ends with heresy."[50]

Imam Ibn Al-Qayim said, "When *mujtahidun* adopt diverse ways of analogy, one of two rules can be valid: either to assume that every *mujtahid* is correct, which means that sometimes two opposite opinions are correct; or to say that it is only one *mujtahid* who is correct. The latter rule seems to be right. However, neither opinion has an advantage over the other."[51]

To sum up this question, we can say that questions regarding which there is a clear text, whether Qur'anic verse or Prophetic hadith, can have only one sound judgment. As for questions regarding which there are vague texts that can be liable to *ijtihad*, all interpretations and individual judgments can be correct. This is applied so long as the proofs supporting each point of view are equally strong.

If Allah wished, He would have made all divine texts clearly of one signification. But He has clarified judgments

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[50]Imam An-Nawawi, *Tahdhib al-Asma' wa al-Lughat*, vol. 2, p. 170 (At-Tibi'at Al-Muniriah).

[51]*I'lam Al-Muwaqi'in*, vol. 1, p. 226.

concerning issues over which people may dispute. And on the other hand, some divine texts have been made liable to human *ijtihad* so that people can adopt the judgments most suitable to their conditions. This is, no doubt, a mercy from Allah to mankind. Al-Baihaqi reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Diverse opinions (among the scholars) of my Ummah are a mercy to people."[52]

Ash-Sha`rani said, "Nothing of the judgments concluded by the scholars of *shari`ah* contradicts the commandments set by either the Holy Qur'an or Prophetic tradition. Yet these judgments may be of various degrees as far as Islam, faith, and the performance of good deeds (*ihsan*) are concerned.[53]

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[52]Explaining the hadiths included in *Ihya'*, Al-`Iraqi reported that Al-Baihaqi narrated this hadith and classified its chain of transmission as weak. In his commentary on *Al-Mughni* of Ibn Qudamah and *Ash-Sharh Al-Kabir* of Al-Maqdisi, the late Sheikh Rashid Rida said, "Some books contain a famous hadith (the one in hand) traceable to the Prophet. Due to the fact that this hadith does not have an authentic chain of transmission, and that some were keen to act upon such a hadith, some scholars maintained that it may have been reported in books that have not survived. People fanatic to certain schools of jurisprudence, however, did not accept the notion that diverse individual judgments can be an act of mercy."

[53]Ash-Sha`rani, *Al-Mizan*, p. 3 (Al-Matba`at Al-Hussainiya, 1329 A.H.). In his introduction to Ibn Qudamah's *Al-Mughni*, Sheikh

I think that scholars of *shari`ah* have agreed long ago to act upon individual judgment so long as it does not exceed the limits of Islam, faith, and the performance of good deeds. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that scholars of *shari`ah* were the first to interpret the Holy Qur'an and Prophetic sunnah and the first to adopt *ijtihad.* Their individual judgments were based on their firm belief in Allah, His Messengers, and the unseen.

**10. Scholastic Theology**

The following is a brief introduction about the science of scholastic theology in an attempt to refute the accusations that it is an act of disbelief and that people working in this field go against the teachings of Islam and the traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Describing the science of scholastic theology, the authority of Islam Al-Ghazali said, "I found it to be thorough field aiming at guarding the faith of the People of the Sunnah, in

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Rashid said, "Sheikh `Abdul-Wahhab Ash-Sha`rani attributed the reason leading to diverse individual judgments pertaining to controversial issues to principles of easing and restraining." This notion was agreed upon by Sheikh Rida's contemporaneous scholars in Egypt.

the manner of the People of the Sunnah, against the confusion of people of innovation."

I chose Imam Al-Ghazali because he is such a superb scholar about whom the great thinker `Abbas Al-`Aqqad said, "None of the philosophers and thinkers had such powerful mental ability as Al-Ghazali."[54]

The Imam said:

> At first, Allah revealed to His Messenger the true faith and commanded him to call people to the best, both in this world and the Hereafter. Then the cursed Satan instilled evil in the minds of the heretics and aroused their doubts against Prophetic tradition. These doubts nearly muddled the true faith. In response, Allah guided scholastic theologians, providing them with brilliant mentalities that enabled them to defend His religion. Thanks to their skill in argumentation, they could unfold the tricks plotted against Islam by the heretics and refute their allegations against Prophetic tradition. They have courageously defended the true

[54] `Abbas Al-`Aqqad, *At-Tafkir Faridat Islamia*, p. 112.

> faith and proved the heretics' falsehood to be null and void.[55]

Aiming to achieve the noble target of guarding the faith, Imam Al-Ghazali wrote his *Al-Iqtisad Al-I`tiqad.* This work still constitutes a part of the curriculum taught in Al-Azhar institutes. In his work on Imam Al-Ghazali, Sheikh Abu Al-Hassan An-Nadawi said:

> As he was endowed with great talents, creative mentality, and abundant knowledge, Imam Al-Ghazali was not content to only report and explain the notions of his predecessors. Rather, he had his own contributions and works that revealed his genius. Fortunately, he lived in a period in which scholastic theology was in dire need of development and adjustment to cope with contemporaneous circumstances and actual life. In this period, imitation was the dominant characteristic of the science. But Al-

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[55]Imam Al-Ghazali, *Al-Munqidh min Ad-Dalal*, p. 81. (Damascus: Maktabat An-Nashr Al-`Arabi). Introduced and studied by Dr. jamil Saliba and Kamal `Abbad.
And I heard our professor Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Yusuf Musa say, "If I were the Sheikh of Al-Azhar, I would make it obligatory for its students to memorize *Al-Munqidh min Ad-Dalal* as they memorize Ibn Malik."

> Ghazali refused imitation and tried to create his own originations. His works tackled Islamic beliefs, divine issues, and issues related to the unseen. All this is introduced in a clear and convincing way that removes the doubts raised by the heretics.[56]

In his *Al-Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldun said:

> Scholastic theology is a science concerned with verifying beliefs by demonstrations that appeal to the mind and refuting the heretics' allegations against the People of the Sunnah. In other words, the core of scholastic theology as a science is *tawhid* (monotheism). It aims at understanding Islamic beliefs in the right way and attempting to prove them with rational demonstrations so as to remove all doubts and heresy.

Further, in his research work on the science of the principles of jurisprudence, Ibn Khaldun said:

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[56]Abu Al-Hassan An-Nadawi, *Hujjat Al-Islam Al-Ghazali* (Al-Mukhtar Al-Islami) and see his series *Rijal al-Fikr wa Ad-Da`wah fi Al-Islam*, part 1 about the effect of theologians Al-Ash`ari and his successors, Abu Mansur Al-Matridi, and Al-Ghazali.

> Ash-Shafi`i (May Allah be pleased with him) was the first to write on scholastic theology. Then came the jurists of the Hanafi School of jurisprudence, then scholastic theologians. Writings of the jurists, however, are mainly concerned with jurisprudence, while the scholastic theologians appealed to the mind and paid no attention to jurisprudence.

The best known writings in this domain include *Al-Burhan* by Imam Al-Haramain and *Al-Mustashfi* by Imam Al-Ghazali (the two of whom belonged to the Ash`arite sect); *Al-`Ahd* by Al-Qadi `Abdul-Jabbar, and *SharhAl-`Ahd* by Abu Al-Hasan Al-Basri (the two of whom belonged to the Mu`tazilite sect). Actually, it is these four works that laid the foundation of scholastic theology as a science. Later on, the four books were summarized by two great scholars, Fakhr Ad-Din Ibn Al-Khatib in his *Al-Mahsul*, and Saif Ad-Din Al-Amidi in his *Al-Ahkam*.

The late professor Dr. `Ali Sami An-Nashar defined scholastic theology as a science concerned with demonstrating beliefs and issues of the faith through mental argumentation. People working in this field are called *al-mutakallimun* (scholastic theologians). Professor An-Nashar believed that, later on, scholastic theologians had to mix their

science with philosophy due to the need to refute the allegations launched against Islam by the Christians.[57]

**11. Why Did Some Muslim Jurists and Hadith Scholars Attack Scholastic Theology?**

Being objective when passing judgment on others' ideas, opinions, or even persons is definitely a moral, scientific, as well as religious duty. On the other hand, it is not accepted to attack a person or a way of thinking simply because one deems something wrong in the object of criticism. Adopting this subjective attitude reflects one's own injustice and transgression. It is through this subjectivity that the science of scholastic theology was attacked.

As defined by Imam Al-Ghazali, the objective of scholastic theology is to guard and preserve the true faith against distortion. And in this sense none can invalidate or attack such branch of knowledge. But the blemishes attributed to scholastic theology emerged later when foreign philosophy had its impact on the people concerned with this subject. Also, some scholastic theologians had an excessive concern with theoretic approaches and intellectual visions that have

[57]Dr. `Ali Sami An-Nashar, *Nashat Al-Fikr Al-Fasafi fi Al-Islam*, pp.

nothing to do with reality. I think that the most important reason that made jurists and hadith scholars deny scholastic theology is the fact that scholars of this science inclined to intellectual interpretation of texts, sometimes raising doubts against such texts without adopting any scientific approach or relying on convincing evidence. Therefore, jurists and hadith scholars accused that group of introducing falsehood in religion, especially those who totally ignored texts and concentrated on defending the faith by means of their human intellect.

How can one deny the scientific and intellectual approaches that held authentic texts in high esteem? There is no wonder about that, since the Holy Qur'an itself takes an intellectual approach. It was the first to verify the true faith through intellectual demonstrations.

If we carefully investigate the Prophetic hadiths mentioned above in the section on interpretation, we shall see that they provided hadith scholars with all the intellectual proofs for true faith. It is reported that Imam Ar-Razi regretted the period he had spent searching in philosophy and scholastic theology, which he expressed in verse:

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3, 8-9 (An-Nahdah, 1954).

Extravagant practice of reasoning has come to nothing,
And much of scholars' endeavors may lead them astray.
As our souls might feel lonely though dwelling in our bodies,
And as our life deeds will turn null and void,
Our search for a lifetime gave us but diverse sayings.

This result was reached only because they had abandoned divine texts and tried to verify true faith by depending only on their intellects. This is what Imam Ar-Razi wanted to tell in the above verses. He was an expert confessing that lifetime search had given him nothing but people's sayings. In his *Ighathat Al- Lahfan* (vol. 1, p. 57), Ibn Al-Qayim expressed the same idea: "The end of the research done by scholastic theologians is to raise doubts about authentic issues, and the end of the Sufi contemplation is to go beyond the limits of the human mind."[58]

[58]Ibn Al-Qayim, *Ighathat Al-Lahfan*, vol. 1, p. 57 (Egypt: Al-Halabi). The book was verified by Muhammad Sayid Kilani in 1381 A.H./1961 A.D.

Yet, it is Ibn Al-Qayim who, in his *Muftah Dar As-Sa`adah wa Manshur Dar Al-Wilayah,* adopted intellectual demonstrations to prove some issues in scholastic theology, such as the issues of good and evil. He also criticized the opinions concluded by the Mu`tazilities as well as the People of the Sunnah. Also, it was he who wrote great books on Sufism such as *Al-Fawa'id*, *Al-Wabil As-Sayib*, *Tariq Al-Hijratain*, and the compehensive *Madarij As-Salikin baina Manazil Iyaka Na`budu wa Iyaka Nasta`in.*

The contradiction between Ibn Al-Qayim's works and the above saying attributed to him can lead us to conclude a judgment pertaining to scholastic theology. He powerfully criticized that field though he had adopted its rational approach in juristic issues. Also, in his *I`lam Al-Muwaqqi`in*, Ibn Al-Qayim affirmed that some of the hadiths denied by some scholars accord with sound analogy. Thus he could bring to agreement the intellectual demonstrations and divine texts.

In *I`lam Al-Muwaqqi`in,* Ibn Al-Qayim reported the following verses on the authority of Ibn `Abdul-Barr:

The Prophet's faith came (to us) through tradition.
Verily, the best way for people is to study this news.
Never be deceived in the hadith and its people,

For personal judgment is vague as back night
And hadith narration is clear as daybreak.
Sometimes one mistakes the right way,
Though it is clear as shining sun ray.[59]

These verses indicate that some jurists attacked scholastic theology only because theologians refused some texts. This is evident from the comparison he made between personal judgment and the hadith.

To summarize, we say that nobody can attack or deny scholastic theology as a scientific intellectual approach to defend the *shari`ah* and that the wrong methodology adopted by later theologians does not justify the denial of the science and the attack on those interested in it. We are still, and will continue to be, in need of adopting intellectual approaches to present and defend the faith.

History proves that some of those who attacked scholastic theology and denied its logic secretly attempted to study it. For example, Ibn As-Salah, who prohibited the study of logic, used to go in secret to the scholar Al-`Imad bin Yunus, asking him to teach him logic. Having realized Ibn As-

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[59]Ibn Al-Qayim, *I`lam Al-Muwaqqi`in*, vol. 1, p. 66.

Salah's failure to assimilate this branch of knowledge, Al-'Imad advised him not to continue studying.[60]

When we studied logic in our early life, a certain scholar summed up the opinions pertaining to studying logic in the following poetic verses:

> Three opinions later scholars had
> Pertaining to the study of logic.
> Ibn As-Salah and An-Nawawi prohibited,
> But some others permitted.
> The soundest opinion comes to say,
> Study logic to know the right way.

In the introduction to his *Bayan Muwafaqat Sarih Al-Ma'qul li Sahih Al-Manqul* (p. 18), Ibn Taimiyah said, "Knowledge comes through either authorized tradition or recognized argumentation."

Concerning intellectual demonstrations and quoted evidence, he believes that both of them can be either definitive or presumptive. When both are definitive, neither of them can be rejected unless one of them is given more weight than the

[60]Dr. 'Ali Sami An-Nashar, *Manahij Al-Bahth 'anda Mufakiri Al-Islami*, p. 180. (Beirut: Dar An-Nahdat Al-'Arabi, 1404 A.H./1984 A.D.)

other. If the presumptive is compared to the definitive, the latter should definitely receive priority.

In this regard, Ibn Taimiyah said, "Here is the rule: the definitive textual demonstration outweighs the intellectual presumptive one. On the other hand, the definitive intellectual demonstration outweighs the textual presumptive one." Furthermore, he believed that if an intellectual presumptive demonstration is compared to a textual presumptive one, the textual is weightier since it is traced back either to Allah or His Messenger, while the presumptive is concluded by human minds which are liable to err.

In his *Tuhfat Al-Maudud*, Ibn Al-Qayim said:

> Prophets have never claimed what may oppose human intellect. But they might have come with what humans can not realize. With regard to the human mind, prophets' missions can be divided into three categories. The first category is accepted by both mind and natural disposition. The second can be recognized

by the mind totally but not in details, while the third cannot be comprehended by the human mind.[61]

It is a matter of fact that calling people to Islam and presenting the Islamic views in intellectual ways acknowledged by non-Muslims will bring about positive results. Thus calling for the rejection of using the intellectual approach is an anti-Islamic action, for the divine texts take both intellect and knowledge into consideration, and the mind itself is an intellectual proof of the existence of Allah Who bestowed it on mankind.

**12. Historical Background**

Anyone who has an idea about the intellectual history of Muslims knows that Muslim thinkers in general, and rationalists in particular, waged fierce intellectual battles to defend Islam. These battles led to the production of great books that have survived through the ages, such as Abu Al-Hasan Al-'Amiri's *Al-I'lam bi Manaqib Al-Islam*, Al-Qadi 'Abdul-Jabbar's *Al-Mughni*, and Al-Khayyat's *Al-Intisar*. The following are examples of the debates in which Muslim thinkers were victorious.

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[61]Ibn Al-Qayim, *Tuhfat Al-Maudud* and also his *Madarij As-Salikin*,

- Al-Kahtib Al-Khawarizmi reported that a Byzantine emperor sent a messenger to the Muslim caliph with abundant wealth and commanded him to give the money to the Muslim scholars in the caliph's court if they answered three questions. But if they did not answer, the messenger was commanded to demand tribute from them.

The messenger met with the caliph and scholars in a mosque. He asked some questions, but none gave a convincing answer. Among the gathering was Abu Hanifah, a young boy at that time. He asked for his father's permission to answer the messenger's questions, but his father refused. He then went to the caliph and asked for his permission, and the caliph agreed.

Then Abu Hanifah addressed the messenger, "Would you ask some questions?" "Of course," the messenger said. Abu Hanifah said, "Then get down from the pulpit. It's now my place, for I shall answer your questions." He then climbed the pulpit and said, "Now you can ask." The messenger said, "What has preceded Allah in existence?" Abu-Hanifah replied, "As you know numerical order, what is the numeral preceding number one?" the messenger said, "Nothing, number one is the first numeral." Abu Hanifah commented,

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vol. 3, p. 491.

"Ah! This is about numerals used for worldly purposes, how about the Only Real One Who created the world? Definitely nothing has preceded Him in existence." Then the messenger asked, "Where can one find the face of Allah?" Abu Hanifah replied, "When you light a candle or a lamp, where can you find its face?" The messenger said, "This is a case in which all sides and directions are the same." Abu Hanifah said, "This is about a perishable light. How then about the One Who gives light and is the source of light? Of course there is no definite direction for His face." Being content with the answer, the messenger further asked, "How does Allah rule the world?" Abu Hanifah's answer was, "He causes the heretics like you, who raise doubts, to fall down as you have fallen from the pulpit, but raises those who believe in the Oneness of Allah, like myself, to higher positions as I have climbed the pulpit." The messenger then left the money and returned to his emperor.[62]

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[62]Ibn Najim, *Al-Ashbah wa An-Nadha'ir,* pp. 427-428. This story reflects the open-mindedness of Muslim scholars and the magnanimity and good behavior shown by the Muslim authority to an envious Christian who came to their land to attack them and raise doubts against their faith. Yet, they let him go home as safe and secure as he had come. But no wonder for that, for they were just following the instructions of their religion, Islam.

- An evil-speaking man came to Abu Hudhail Al-`Allaf, the first scholastic theologian, at whose hands three thousand persons converted to Islam[63], and said that the Holy Qur'an contains grammatical errors. To this Abu Hudhail said, "Do you want a general or detailed answer?" "A general comment is enough," the man said. Abu Hudhail replied, "As you know, the disbelievers have spared no effort to attack Prophet Muhammad and raise doubts about the Holy Qur'an, but have you heard that they could ever find a single grammatical error in the Qur'anic text?" "Definitely no!" the man exclaimed, astonished.

- Abu Hudhail went to console Salih bin `Abdul-Quddus on the death of his son. Because Salih was so grieved, Abu Hudhail said to him, "O Salih! There is no justification for your sadness, unless you believe that men resemble plants in that they die forever." Salih said, "I am sad mostly because he died before he read the *Book on Skepticism*." "What is the *Book on Skepticism*?" Abu Hudhail asked. Salih answered, "It is one of my books. Whoever reads this book will be in such doubt about the occurrence of past events that he will believe that they have never occurred. He will also be in such

[63]Prof. Sheikh `Ali Mustafa Al-Ghurabi, *Abu Hudhail Al-`Allaf Awal Al-Mutakamin*, p. 16.

doubt about things that have never occurred that he will believe their reality." Upon hearing this Abu Hudhail exclaimed, "Well! You can so doubt your son's death that you believe that he is still alive and be so doubtful that he had not read the book that you believe that he had read it!"

- It happened that Harun Ar-Rashid, the Abbaside caliph, had imprisoned some of the Mu`tazilite imams for political reasons because they supported the Alawis against him. Having learned about this, the King of Sind [in what is now part of Pakistan] sent a message to Caliph Ar-Rashid accusing him of tyranny. The message also included some attacks against Islam, claiming that it is based on imitation, not contemplation, and that it had spread by the sword, not because of its tolerance with other religions. The King of Sind challenged Caliph Ar-Rashid to send him a Muslim person able to argue for Islam against one of his people. The message concluded that whoever lost the argument would follow the religion of the other.

Upon this Caliph Ar-Rashid charged a Muslim judge to go for the debate. The adversary was the head of an Indian sect that denies divine revelation. The following dialogue occurred between the Muslim judge and the Indian:

Indian adversary: Would you tell me about your Lord, is He Almighty?

Muslim judge: Of course He is.

Indian adversary: Can He create an entity like Himself?

Muslim judge: This question is related to scholastic theology, which my companions reject and deem as an innovation in religion.

Indian adversary: Who are your companions?

Muslim judge: These are Imam Muhammad bin Al-Hasan, Imam Abu Yusuf, and Imam Abu Hanifah.

Here the Indian adversary turned to the King of Sind and said, "O your majesty! Haven't I previously told you that Muslims are ignorant people adhering to a cult of imitation and that Islam has spread by the sword?"

Upon the judge's return to Baghdad, the King of Sind gave him a message to Caliph Ar-Rashid. It said, "I was sure about all that I said in my last letter, and your judge's argument confirmed these ideas." Having read the message, Caliph Ar-Rashid was furious and said, "Isn't there anybody

to argue for this religion?" Some people in the caliph's court said, "The most skillful persons to argue for Islam are prevented from doing so and some of them are now in prison." Upon this the caliph ordered that the Mu`tazilite imams be released and brought to the court.

When they came, Caliph Ar-Rashid told them about the King of Sind, the debate held in his court, and the question of the Indian adversary: Can Allah create an entity like Himself? A young person of the Mu`tazilites stood and started to reply to this question. He said that it is impossible for Allah to create an entity like Himself, because the created object is invented and new, which is contrary to the Ever Old, an attribute of Allah. How then can the new be similar to the ever old?"

Having heard this eloquent answer, Caliph Ar-Rashid commanded that a group of the Mu`tazilite scholars, headed by Ma`ammar bin `Abbad, should head for the King of Sind and debate with the Indian adversary.

It is time to refer to the great books compiled to refute the allegations against Islam. Among them is Al-Qadi `Abdul-Jabbar's *Al-Mughni*, which is a major reference of scholastic theology, according to the Mu`tazilites. Chapter five of that book is dedicated to refuting the allegations raised by

contemporaneous anti-Islamic trends, whether Christian or pagan. Actually, Muslim scholars of the Mu`tazilite sect have exerted great effort in defending Islam and refuting all accusations against it. Their efforts have enriched and empowered the Islamic front in the intellectual struggle among world civilizations.[64]

In fact, the intellectual war against Islam has never stopped since then. During the French occupation of Algeria, Mr. Hantu, an Orientalist and French Minister of Foreign Affairs, launched bitter accusations against Islam. But Imam Muhammad `Abduh shouldered the task of refuting all these allegations through a series of essays that were later collected under the title *Al-Islam wa An-Nasrania ma` Al-Mu`allim wa Al-Madania.*

In Egypt, the war against Islam was also fierce. It started with the attacks of Lord Cromer, who declared that Islam had come to an end. Then came the Egyptian students in Orientalism such as Muhammad Mazhhar, Ahmad Lutfi El-Sayid, Taha Hussein, and Muhammad Hussein Haykal, who also contributed to the enmity towards Islam. But Allah

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[64]Dr. Muhammad `Imarah, *Al-Khilafah wa Nash'al Al-Ahzab Al-Islamia*, p. 389 (Dar Al-Hilal).

guided one of the great Muslim scholars, Sheikh Mustafa `Abdur-Raziq, to defend His religion.

Sheikh `Abdur-Raziq was the first professor of Islamic philosophy in the Middle East. Then he became the Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar. This man exerted much effort and fought tirelessly against the Orientalist attacks. His efforts empowered the moderate *Salafi* trend. He succeeded in refuting all the Orientalist allegations, causing some of the major symbols of this movement to turn back to the right way of Islam. For example, Taha Hussein repented and wrote his *`Ala Hamish As-Sirah*, *Al-Wa`d Al-Haqq* and *Mir`aat Al-Islam*. Also, Dr. Hussein Haykal wrote his masterpieces *Hayat Muhammad, Fi Manzil Al-Wahy, As-Siddiq,* and *Al-Faruq `Umar.*

After what we have mentioned, do you think that we should imprison intellect and denounce the reasoning method in the so-called Islamic Awakening?

### 13. Allah Abides in the Heaven

If we were committed to the surface meaning of some Qur'anic verses and Prophetic hadiths, we would believe that Allah abides in some place, which is the heaven, and that He is there firmly established on the throne. We would also

believe that Allah has organs (hands, eyes, legs, and feet) similar to the human body. Such a belief may make it difficult for people to think of Allah as other than corporeal.

This commitment to the literal understanding of texts has led some people to think of Allah as being like a human being, high be He above this, and they have texts, with their surface meanings, supporting their views. The following are some of these:

- Imam Al-Bukhari, in The Book of Monotheism (*Tawhid*) of his *Sahih* reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him), in telling about the Dajjal, said, "Allah is not one-eyed (referring with his finger to his eye) and it is Al-Masih Ad-Dajjal who is one-eyed."

Ibn Battal commented that those who think that Allah is like human beings take this hadith as evidence. They claim that the Prophet's pointing to his eye indicates that Allah's eye is similar. But Ibn Battal refuted this allegation, supporting his views by the scholastic theologians' discussion on The New and The Old (*Fath Al-Bari*, vol. 13, p. 332).

- It is reported in a hadith that a person had beaten a young boy on his eye. Upon this the Prophet said to that person, "Don't you know that Allah created Adam in the

shape of Himself?" Those who think that Allah has organs similar to those of humans take this hadith as a proof, supported by another narration of the same hadith, which says, "Don't you know that Allah created Adam in the shape of the Most Gracious?"

Some scholars of the People of the Sunnah argued to deny such a narration of the hadith saying that even if this narration is authentic, it should be interpreted in the way that best suits Allah's divine Entity and holds Him high above similarity to mankind.

Al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar said that "the Most Gracious" in this hadith was reported by Ibn Abi `Assim and At-Tabarni on the authority of Ibn `Umar through an authentic chain of transmission. Ibn Abi `Assim also reported the same meaning on the authority of Abu Yunus after Abu Hurairah, but in different wording: "If anyone of you should fight, he has to beat his enemy away from the face, for it is created in the shape of the Most Gracious." Ibn Abi `Assim commented on this narration saying, "It should be explained according to the opinion of the People of the Sunnah. It should be accepted as it is or interpreted in a way suitable to tell about

Allah without believing, in the least degree, that Allah might resemble mankind,"[65]

It is important here to refer to the historical background behind the theory of *tajsim* (anthropomorphism). This idea was first introduced by some of the Jews who converted to Islam. It is they who fabricated Allah's incarnation in sublimity, which made `Ali subject them to severe chastisement by fire.[66] Then some Muslims were influenced and imitated that Jewish group in believing that Allah has organs similar to human ones. They said, "Allah felt pain in His eye and the angels went to visit Him as people do with the sick."[67]

Unfortunately, some of the *Salafi* scholars imitated the Jews and exaggerated in giving demonstrations for the attributes of Allah to the extent that they likened the divine attributes to

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[65]*Fath Al-Bari*, vol. 5, pp. 138-139 and vol. 11, pp. 2-3. Also *Al-Imla' `ala Ishkalat Al-Ihya'* in the footnote of *Al-Ihya'*, vol. 1, p. 193.

[66]Ibn Al-Qayim, *At-Turuq Al-Hukmiyah*, p. 24, (Al-Matba`ah Al-Muniriyah, 1372 A.H./1953 A.D.). Verified by Sheikh Mahmud `Arnus.

[67]Ash-Shahristani, *Al-Milal wa An-Nihal*, part 1, p. 97. (Al-Anglo Al-Misria). Verified by Sheikh Muhammad Fath Allah Badran. Also *Al-`Aqa'id Al-`Ududiah*, pp. 168-169.

human characteristics.[68] But they justify their view by claiming that it is true that Allah has body, blood, hands, and feet but that they are not similar to those of any creature.[69] Nothing is like Him and He resembles nothing.[70]

Actually, it was the Jews who founded the Shiite beliefs and sect. The story started when some rabbis claimed conversion to Islam. They introduced the idea of *Al-Ma`sum* (one who is infallible) and invented some false hadiths attributed to the Prophet. All these hadiths, which are derived from the Torah, speak about the similarity between Allah's divine entity and creatures.

Ash-Shahristani said that they believed in Allah's similarity to creatures because they were affected by the Torah, which includes many passages on this theme. For example, there are verses speaking about the shape of Allah, His descending to Mount Sinai, His sitting on the Throne, and people's ability to see and speak orally to Him. They say that He sits

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[68]Ash-Shahristani, *Al-Milal wa An-Nihal*, p. 84.

[69]*Sharh Al-`Aqa'id Al-`Ududiah*, pp. 168-169.

[70]Ash-Shahristani, *Al-Milal wa An-Nihal*, part 1, pp. 96-97, 155. Also Dr. An-Nashar, *Nashat Al-fikr Al-Fasafi*, pp. 18-19.

on the Throne as one sits on a new sofa, high be He above what they say.

Those who believe in Allah's similarity to creatures report that the Prophet said, "In a meeting with my Lord, He shook hands with me and put His palm to my chest so that I could feel His cool fingers."

All these beliefs perplexed the People of the Sunnah, including the majority of Muslim scholars. Some said that they should only report authentic texts, believing that Allah has no like. Others inclined to the opinion that they should interpret all texts in the way that best suits Allah's divine Entity. By doing so, they aimed to refute all sophisms, especially that of *tajsim* (Allah's similarity to creatures).

In his *Asas At-Taqdis*, Imam Al-Fakhr Ar-Razi said:

> The Qur'anic texts telling about Allah's Entity should not be taken in their surface meanings. Rather, they need careful interpretation for a number of reasons. First, because the surface meaning of the verse ❬*in order that you may be brought up under My Eye*❭ implies that Prophet Moses be closely attached to Allah's eye, which is not accepted. Second, the surface meaning of the verse ❬*But construct the ship under*

> *Our Eyes*) implies that eyes represent the tool by which the ark is made. Third, because the face having more than two eyes is an ugly one, High be Allah above that. [The Arabic word for "eyes" in the verse is plural rather than dual.] All these reasons imply a necessity for interpreting the surface meanings of these verses to reflect Allah's care for Moses and Noah.

I think that this kind of interpretation is adopted even in Arabic poetry such as:

> If Allah observes you with His eyes, then sleep quietly,
> For you have security against all fears.

Speaking about interpretation in his *Ihya' `Ulum Ad-Din* (vol. 1, p. 107), Imam Al-Ghazali said that the need for interpretation emerges when an idea is expressed in metaphoric or symbolic style. Metaphor and symbolism aim to ensure the meaning in one's mind. For example, "adorning pigs with pearl necklaces" is a metaphor for spreading knowledge and wisdom to other than those deserving it. Because some people may not be able to comprehend this meaning, interpretation is needed.

Another example is the Prophet's hadith saying, "As a piece of leather shrinks when put to fire, the mosque's area gets

smaller when people expectorate inside it." Everyone can realize that the mosque's area can never get smaller because of expectorating in it, but it is a metaphor for disdain and violation against the sanctity of the mosque.

A third example is the Prophet's hadith in which he said, "Doesn't one who raises his head from bowing (in prayer) before the imam fear Allah may turn his head into a donkey's head?" It has never happened that Allah has turned a man's head into a donkey's, but it is only a symbol for the foolishness of one who precedes the imam in prayer.

As a matter of fact, the true meaning might be indicated either through rational evidence or through *shari`ah.* Rational evidence is represented in the fact that the action is mentally unaccepted. For example, in a hadith the Prophet said, "A believer's heart lies between two fingers in the hand of the Most Gracious." Contemplating this hadith, one can realize that if we search a believer's heart we would not find fingers around it. Rather, fingers are used to symbolize the ability of Allah to change peoples' hearts.

Accordingly, there was no blame on those who interpreted the statement that Allah abides in the heaven to refer to a different connotation than the direction in which He exists

because He is high above existing in a certain place or another. As Imam `Ali said, "Allah does not exist in a certain place to attribute the action of moving to Him, high be He above that."

Clarifying the ten principles in knowing Allah, Imam Al-Ghazali said:

> We should realize the fact that Allah is high above being in a certain direction or location, for it is He Who created all directions and locations. So, where was He before their creation, and how can He be here or there after their creation? Nothing is above Allah and nothing is under Him. (*Al-Ihya'*, vol 1, p. 110).

It happened that the Prophet (peace be upon him) once asked a female slave, "Where is Allah?" She pointed to the sky meaning that He is in the heaven. Upon this the Prophet said to her master, who had vowed to set her free, "Set your female slave free." This command of the Prophet reflects his acceptance of the female slave's belief according to her knowledge. Commenting on this story, Al-Hafidh said that the Prophet acknowledged her faith as it was so that she might not incline to deny all the divine attributes of Allah

because she did not have mental power enough to realize that Allah does not have a like, high be He above that.

In his explanation to the Prophet's saying, "No person is more jealous than Allah," Al-Hafidh said:

> Linguistically, the word "*shakhs*" (person) is used for people, a concept that is impossible to be attributed to Allah. Therefore, it should be interpreted in the way that best suits Allah's divine Entity. A suggested interpretation is "None is more jealous than Allah." Thus the word "*shakhs*" could have been used only to exaggerate in order to verify the belief of one who cannot realize the existence of the One Who has no like. Otherwise, he might incline to the concept of *at-ta`til,* which denies Allah all His attributes, as opposed to *at-tashbih,* which attributes human characteristics to Allah. (Al-Fath, vol. 13, p. 343).

In the same way, if anyone believes in *at-tashbih* (attributing human characteristics to Allah) acknowledges that there is no god but the One in the heaven, he would not be judged a believer unless he is a common man who does not comprehend what *at-tashbih* might be. In this regard, Al-Hulaimi said that if a Jew says that there is no god but Allah,

he would not be regarded as a believer unless he testifies that Allah has no like. (See *Fath Al-Bari*, vol. 13, p. 307).

However, those who accept the surface meaning of the verse ❬*Allah abides in the heaven*❭ support their view with rational evidence. They claim that if we do not say that Allah is in heaven, it would mean that He is not an entity, but rather, abstract.

Actually, this evidence, attributed to Ibn Taimiyah, contradicts the concept of applying the surface meaning of divine texts related to divine issues and diverts one from *at-tashbih* (attributing human characteristics to Allah), *at-ta`til* (denying all divine attributes of Allah), and *at-ta'wil* (interpretation).

In his *Al-Fasl baina Al-Milal,* Ibn Hazm denies that Allah exist in a certain place or time.[71]

In the Qur'an, Allah says:

❬*And He is Allah in the heavens and the earth*❭
(Al-An`am, 3)

and

[71]Ibn Hazm, *Al-Fasl*, vol. 2, p. 238.

﴾*And He is with you wherever you are*﴿

(Al-Hadid, 4)

He also says:

﴾*There are not secret consultations between three but He is fourth of them, nor between five, but He is the sixth of them nor fewer than that, nor more, but He is with them wherever they may be*﴿

(Al-Mujadalah, 7)

Ibn Hazm said, "Yes, He is fourth and the sixth of them because he sees them and hears their talk, not because He is with them in person."[72]

Elsewhere in the Qur'an Allah says:

﴾*We are nearer to him than his jugular vein*﴿

(Qaf, 16)

This is true because Allah is always attending with us, and all our senses can realize this attendance. Yet unlike one's jugular vein, He does not exist in a certain part of man's

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[72] *Al-Fasl*, vol. 1, p. 81.

body because He is high above existing in a certain place or time.[73]

Allah has told about His Entity in the verse ❮*And He is Allah in the heavens and the earth*❯ (Al-An`am, 3) and about His attributes in some verses such as ❮*And Allah is the One Who in heaven is Allah, and in earth is Allah*❯ (Az-Zukhruf, 84).

According to Ibn Hazm, it is permissible to say, "Allah is with us wherever we may be," but not to say, "Allah is everywhere." The same opinion is held by some scholastic theologians.

Here arises a rational question: As it was Allah Who created time and place, how can He be in a certain time or place? Attempting to answer this question, Imam Ibn Taimiyah said, "Allah does ever recreate the Throne so that the Throne is not old because Allah is firmly established on it since antiquity." Actually there is evidence for this interpretation. Therefore, we can accept the surface meaning of all divine texts telling that He is in the heaven and interpret other texts accordingly, or we can subject all texts on the topic to interpretation. But we should not interpret some texts on the

[73]Mahmud Hubb Allah, *Al-Hayat al-Wijdaniyah wa Al-`Aqidah Ad-*

topic and leave others to a surface understanding because it is being partial to a certain opinion over another.

Truly, the perfection of a society depends on the extent of cooperation among its individuals and groups. Likewise, any society derives its safety from the Divine Ideal, and a living good example follows. As for Muslims all over the world, they derive their safety from their absolute belief in Allah, the only One Who has no partner or like. They are going on the right way as they follow and act upon the traditions and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). But this ideal can be distorted if they believe that He exists in some place or another.

All Muslims on the earth believe in Allah and highly glorify Him above having a like. They all believe in all prophets and in the Day of Judgment as told by Allah. Therefore, there is no blame on any Muslim either to consider interpretation of divine texts or accept them with their surface meaning. None is permitted to accuse others of disbelief merely because they do not follow his concepts and trends. This is based on the rule that diverse opinions of scholars are a kind of mercy to the nation.

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*Diniyah*, p. 274 (Al-Halabi, 1367 A.H./1948 A.D.).

It was previously mentioned that some of the great scholars of the Sunnah inclined to interpretation in some cases. We should follow the same course of tolerance. Let us concentrate our efforts in spreading our faith from the practical point of view. If we read the book or chapter on faith in the great compilations of hadith, we will find that the grand imams compiled hadith on both beliefs and acts. They reported hadiths on all aspects of life, individual, social, economic, and moral, including even the removal of harms from the roads. Is it suitable then to confine our discussions to theoretical beliefs and accuse those who do not follow our course of blasphemy and disbelief?

### 14. We Realize Allah by Firm Belief

There is no doubt that this trend can turn faith into a controversial question and weaken its power in peoples' hearts and its effects on their behaviors. This trend can never enrich the Muslim's faith. Rather, it is the fullness of the creed and its themes in general, without any details, which refresh his senses.

In fact, faith is the real link between man and the universe. This links gets deeper through contemplation of three books: the Living Book represented in the Sunnah of Prophet

Muhammad (peace be upon him), the Speaking Book represented in the Qur'an, and the Silent Book represented in the universe around man. Contemplating these three books enriches the natural, instinctive light that Allah has created in man, which is further enriched by the light of revelation. This natural light can then lead man to the greatest light of the divine attributes of Allah, the light against which all other lights disappear. It is only by firm belief that man can realize the light of Allah in the same way as the eye can see a concrete object. Firm belief can give man the power to look at the Throne where Allah is firmly established, managing all affairs of the universe and ruling the world with absolute power. He is the Lord Who creates objects and provides them with sustenance. It is He Who causes life and death, alters the day and night, and raises some people to high status and degrades others.

He is the Lord to Whom angel messengers ascend and with Whose decrees they descend. All that He wants definitely happens exactly as He likes it to be, wherever and whenever He likes. He sees everything and hears everything all at the same time. He has knowledge of everything, whether secret or open.

He is the Supreme Lord in this world and in the Hereafter, and all creatures are His servants and slaves. He has power over everything, His mercy extends to everything, and His graces and bounties can reach every living object. It is He Who forgives peoples' sins and removes their troubles. He gives sustenance to the needy and imparts knowledge to the ignorant. He leads the astray and guides the perplexed. Hallowed be He Who feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, heals the sick, and relieves the distressed.

Glory be to Allah Who accepts the repentant, rewards the benevolent, supports the wronged, punishes the oppressor, gives security to the fearful, honors some people, and humiliates some others. Allah never sleeps, nor is He susceptible to fatigue. Peoples' day actions are raised to Him before the night comes and the night actions are raised to Him before the day breaks. His veil is the light that, if He removes it, can burn everything that His sight can reach. He is Allah the Ever Free from Want Who spends by day and night without decreasing anything from His treasures.

He changes the hearts of all people, and all affairs of the universe go according to His decree. On the Day of Judgment, the whole of the earth will be but His handful and the heavens will be rolled in His right hand. He will shake

both of them with His hands and say, "Verily, I am the King, I am the King. It is I Who created the whole world from nothing and it is only I Who am capable of returning it back to its first state."

He forgives all kinds of sin, however grave, and gives everything people may ask Him for, however great. If all creatures in heaven and on earth, including mankind and the jinn from antiquity until the Day of Judgment were as pious as the most pious person, they would add nothing to His sovereignty. And if all creatures in heaven and on earth, including mankind and the jinn from antiquity until the Day of Judgment were as sinful as the worst person, they would decrease nothing of His Sovereignty. If all the creatures in heaven and earth, including all mankind and jinn from antiquity until the Day of Judgment, stood in the same place and asked Him their needs, and He gave each his need, all that they take would not reach even the weight of an atom in His sovereignty.

Moreover, if all the trees on earth were used to makes pens, and the ocean were ink with which to write the words of Allah, the oceans would be exhausted sooner than would the words of the Lord, even if seven oceans were added to it, glory be to Him! He is the First, before Whom nothing

occurred, and He is the Last after Whom nothing can continue to be. He is the Evident so that nothing can be above Him, and He is the Inward so that nothing can be under Him. Exalted be Allah, the most deserving to be remembered, most deserving to be worshiped, and most deserving to be praised. Exalted be Allah, the first to be thanked. He is the Most Competent to be asked for help, the Most Merciful to rule, the Most Generous to be asked for a need, the Most Tolerant, and the Most Fair, Whose judgment depends on His mercy before might.

None has due right with Him,
Nay and He wastes no endeavor of any.
If He punishes, it's His Fair Judgment,
And if He forgives, it's His Grace.
Verily, He is the Most Generous.

Glory be to Allah, the Absolute King Who has no partner, the Only One Who has no like, the Ever Free from Want Who depends on none, the Eternal and Absolute Who neither begets nor is begotten, and the High to Whom none is equal. Everything is perishable but His face, every kingdom will come to an end except His sovereignty, every shade is shrinkable but that of Him, and every grace will end but His grace. Exalted be Allah Who rewards for worship and

forgives disobedience. No affliction comes but with His fair judgment, and no grace comes but with His bounty.

﴿*His Command, when He intends a thing, is only to say to it: "Be" and it is.*﴾

(Ya-Sin, 82).

﴿*This is Allah your Lord, so blessed be Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. He is the Ever- Living, there is no god but He. Therefore call sincerely upon Him, Religion is purely for Him alone. All Praise be to Allah, The Lord of the Worlds.*﴾

(Ghafer, 64-65)

If peoples' heart realized the illuminating power of these divine attributes of Allah, they would definitely leave everything, being totally occupied in the remembrance of Allah. And it is enough for them that it is Allah Who cares for them.

Verily, it is enough greatness
To be a sincere slave of Allah,
Who meets me at every time.
Truly, He is High in Holiness,
But I can meet Him at any time and place.

We conclude with praise to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds.

## (14)

## ON UNDERSTANDING

## A PROPHETIC HADITH

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "My nation will witness events similar to those witnessed by the Children of Israel. The Children of Israel divided into seventy-two sects, but my nation will divide into seventy-three sects, all of which will be doomed to Hellfire on the Day of Judgment except only one: those who follow the same course as myself and my Companions."[1]

### Significance of the Hadith

In this hadith the Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that the Muslim nation will be divided into various sects, but it is only one of them that will achieve salvation on the Day of

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[1]Reported by Ibn Majah, At-Tirmidhi, and Abu Dawud, but in different forms.

Judgment. This successful sect is the one acting upon his teachings and following the course of his Companions.

There is no doubt that the Muslim nation has already witnessed division. Also, the Prophets' telling that only one sect will be secure is quite right, because Truth is only one, which he acted upon and was followed by his Companions. Whoever neglects or deviates from this Truth will definitely go astray.

**Reasons for Division**

The meaning of the hadith indicates that the division that will lead people to the Hellfire is the division in beliefs. This is based on the fact that the reason behind salvation and perdition is the same reason behind division. It is clear that the sects have divided because they adopted diverse beliefs. This is supported by the Qur'anic verse

> ❨*surely those who have made divisions in their religion and become factions, you are not of them in anything...*❩
>
> (Al-An`am, 159)

Literally, the word "*tafrîq*" (from *farraqa*) means the splitting of one thing into parts. But Hamzah and Al-Kisa'i read the word "*farraqû*" (from *farraqa*) in the above verse as

"*fâraqû*" (from *fâraqa*), which means to separate from something or to leave it.[2] This recitation of the two scholars supports the view that the division referred to in the hadith is the separation in beliefs.

This is clarified by what Ibn Battal reported in his *Sharh Bukhari* on the authority of Abu Hanifah, who said: It happened that I met `Ata' bin Abi Rabah in Makkah, and I asked him about something. "Where are you from?" he inquired. I said, "I am from Kufa." He exclaimed, "From the village whose inhabitants are divided into diverse religious sects?" I said, "Yes" He asked, "To which sect do you belong?" I said, "I belong to those who do not curse the *Salaf* (righteous predecessors), believe in *qadr* (destiny) and never accuse anybody of disbelief for committing sins." Upon this `Ata' said, "This is the right way, so stick to it."

In his *Al-I`tisam*, Ash-Shatbi verified that *mujtahidun* (scholars who formulate independent opinions in legal or theological matters) can never be included among those divided in beliefs. This is because they work to find solutions for the controversial issues facing the Muslim communities.

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[2] *Farraqa* and *fâraqa* have close spellings in Arabic. Both come from the root *faraqa*, to separate. (editor)

The matters of *ijtihad* are those which are not referred to in the texts, i.e., the Qur'an and Sunnah, nor by *ijma`* (consensus of scholars).

Likewise, each group or person has his own way except in things that affect beliefs. Only then can he be judged to have adopted diverse beliefs. For example, some people, according to their beliefs, may deify a certain person or speak of him as having some divine attributes. This is no doubt an act of disbelief.

Or some others may adopt some attitudes that, though they do not deviate from common Muslim beliefs, may cause a rift in the nation's unity, weaken its powers, and pave the way for the enemies to dominate the Muslim world, politically or otherwise.

On the surface, all these facts show that, according to above hadith, all sects but one of the Muslim nation will be doomed to Hell on the Day of Judgment for adopting diverse beliefs. The separation is not necessarily the cause for going to Hell, if one abides by the path of the Prophet and his Companions. But if one separates for an innovation that leads to immorality and disbelief, he goes to Hell. This does not deny that he could enter Hell for laxity in duty. But the separation

is in beliefs, or an action based on such belief, or an action that leads to the disunity of the nation (*ummah*) and threatens its security.

**Muslim Sects' Dispute on Achieving Salvation**

Since long ago, all Muslim sects that testify that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the Messenger of Allah have been involved in a dispute to decide which party will achieve salvation. Each of these sects—be it Sufi, Mu`tazilite, Sunni, Shi'ite, Ash`ari, Maturidi, or Mujassamah (who claim that Allah has a body like human beings)—claims to follow the teachings of Prophet Muhammad and supports its views with reasoning and quoted texts.

The Mujassamah are of two categories: one believing in the doctrine without telling any details about the reality of these characteristics, while the other one believes in the doctrine and gives details. Speaking of both categories, Al-Jalal Ad-Dawani said:

> Members of the first category are not judged as disbelievers, while members of the second category are. Most members of these categories are literalists who stick to the surface meaning of texts of the Qur'an and Prophetic Hadith.

Among the Mujassamah are Ibn Taimiyah and his followers. They tried to support the view that Allah exists in a certain place and that He is found in a defined direction. In spite of being a renowned scholar of traditions and reason, Ibn Taimiyah, as found in some of his compilations, believed that there is no logical difference between saying, "Something is non-existing" and saying, "I searched for it everywhere but never found it." Moreover, he exaggerated in this view and accused his opponents of believing in the doctrine of *ta`til* (denying all divine attributes of Allah).

One of the contemporaries of Ibn Taimiyah, Imam Taqiy Ad-Din Abu Bakr Al-Husaini, wrote a book entitled *Daf` Shubaht man Shabbaha wa Tamarrad* in which he reported that the venerable Imam Ahmad had refuted Ibn Taimiyah's views on the doctrine of *tashbih* (ascribing human characteristics to Allah) and the belief that Allah exist in a certain place. But Imam Ahmad did not say this and he is innocent.

`Abdul-Hakim As-Siyalakuti reported that Sheikh Ibn Al-`Arabi exclaimed in his *Al-Futuhat*, "Unfortunately, this sect has ignored clear-cut Qur'anic text and kept to doubtful texts with uncertain interpretations. They have left the verse

❨*There is nothing like Him*❩." However, I think that this statement is traced back to Ibn `Arabi, the renowned Sufi, not to Ibn Al-`Arabi, the famous scholar of Prophetic hadith from Morocco.

**Can You Know Which Sect Will Be Saved?**

With each sect claiming to be following the course of the Prophet and his Companions, supporting its allegations by all possible means, and judging other sects to be deviant, how can one distinguish among these group? The issue gets more difficult if we know that some of these groups, especially the Sufis, Islamic philosophers, and Ash`aris, are very keen to follow the Prophet's tradition in all affairs, however minor in importance. Also, almost all groups have accepted some divine texts with their surface meaning, but adopted interpretation with some others. Meanwhile, each group claims to be on the right way and calls others to follow it.

In *Tahqiq Daqiq Farid*, Imam Muhammad `Abduh said that verifying the sect that will achieve salvation on the Day of Judgment on account of its beliefs is controversial for several reasons. He mentioned five. Among them are:

▪ Each sect claims that it follows the right path, and it is impossible for its members to break away from it. Otherwise, if they deviate from their course, they are no longer standing on firm ground. The invalidator will have all the views equal before him, for all are based on evidence or proof. What remains in relation to reality is an opinion that has priority over another acceptable one. Thus, invalidating one principle may lead to invalidating others, and this, in turn, creates a skeptical attitude towards all evidence and proofs. Thus it becomes inevitable that all sects will achieve salvation provided that they all agree on what came in the *shari`ah* concerning issues related to the Divine Entity, prophethood, and the Day of Judgment.

▪ Each group has a certain number of issues peculiar to it only and believes that these issues are the signs of the right path. Actually, such trends come mainly from fanaticism for the head of the sect and taking the path of insistence and censure.

▪ Some kind of disagreement can be found among the members of the same sect. If disputants in the same sect are judged not to achieve salvation, their opponents will be of the same kind. It is known that

the Ash`ari scholars have debated over thirty principles with their Maturidi counterparts, while their discussions with philosophers may not cover the same number of issues. So, how can they concentrate on only one of these debates but gives no heed to the others?[3]

- Prophet Muhammad taught us that Allah is the Only True God, to Whom the highest degrees of perfection are attributed, and the One Being high above all kinds of deficiency. He also taught us that all issues related to prophethood have been revealed by Allah, and that the Day of Judgment is true and inevitably coming. Accordingly, these facts are agreed upon by all Muslim sects. Therefore, he who believes in this is on the Prophet's path.

Imam Muhammad `Abduh further said, in summary, that it is necessary to take Arabic words along with their connotations into consideration—and they are known to us, i.e. we do not have to look deeper—when speaking about legal controversial questions. Yet I think that if we apply this rule,

[3]I think that the number of issues debated over between the Ash`ari and Maturidi scholars is forty, not thirty. See Sheikh Zadah, *Nadhm Al-Fara'id* (Al-Abidah, 1317 A.H.). (author)

only the sect believing in the doctrine of *tajsim* will achieve salvation because they necessitate considering the surface meaning of texts and neglect the way of deduction.

Therefore, we have to adopt deduction and interpretation to understand texts that may seem vague. Surface meaning is insufficient. He said:

> As a matter of fact, nobody could comprehend the details of the Prophet's knowledge and to what extent he glorified Allah, which remained a secret known only to Allah and His Messenger. But we all have nothing to do but to believe in what has reached us of his traditions and hadiths on divine attributes, prophethood, and the Day of Judgment.

In his *Ma`alim As-Sunan* (vol. 4, p. 273) Al-Khatabi said, "One who adopts interpretation is not considered out of Islam, even if he makes an error in his interpretation."

### The Imam's Hope for Every Sect's Salvation

He [Muhammad `Abduh] said:

> It is only by Allah's grace and guidance that one can realize true knowledge, for this hadith of the Prophet

(peace be upon him) can have various meanings such as:

- The sect that will achieve salvation may have appeared and died out in past generations.

- It is likely that all sects will achieve salvation so long as they follow the Prophet's course in major issues related to divine attributes, prophethood, and the Day of Judgment. What is disagreed upon is what is not clearly known from the Prophet and his Companions, or else they would not have disagreed.

This hesitation in deciding which sect will achieve salvation implies that all of them support their views by the Qur'an and the Prophet's tradition. It pleased me that another hadith attributed to the Prophet tells that it is only one sect that will be doomed to reside in Hellfire.

The hadith that pleased Imam Muhammad `Abduh reminds me of the conclusion with which our late professor Sheikh Hammudah Ghurabah, closed his doctoral research on Ibn Sina (Avicenna). Ibn Taimiyah and Ibn As-Salah had judged Ibn Sina to be apostate, yet Sheikh Hammudah hoped to

meet Ibn Sina in the Hereafter and stay with him in the shade of the trees in Paradise.

Among the justifications for hoping for salvation for such thinkers is that the *mujtahidun* are excused if they err because they aim at doing something for knowledge and faith. In his *Faisal At-Tafriqah* Al-Ghazali said, "When one seeks knowledge and makes his endeavors for it but dies before achieving his target, his failure is certainly excused."

Also, in his *Al-Mustasfi*, Al-Ghazali reported, "Al-Jahidh claimed that if a non-Muslim refuses Islam out of stubborn, unjustified pertinacity, he is sinful; but if he thinks about and contemplates the matter, but fails to conclude a sound resolution, he is justified without sin." It happened that an American Muslim woman complained of her anxiety for her dead parents who had no knowledge about Islam. But when I told her about this opinion of Al-Jahidh, she was happy and her fears were alleviated.

And in the marginal notes of *Al-`Isam* (which was assigned to us in Faculty of Islamic Theology), writing on divergent creeds, he said:

> Al-`Anbari and Al-Jahidh said that perpetual torture in Hellfire is inevitable only for the stubborn disbeliever.

> As for an unbeliever who endeavored to reach the right path but was not guided to Islam or the Truth, he has an excuse. It is worth mentioning that it is the people of the Sunnah who concluded that Allah might forgive such unbelief. They based this view on the fact that the whole universe, including all creatures, is the sovereignty of Allah alone and He disposes all affairs according to His Will. However, Mu`tazilite scholars were opposed to this view.

And in the marginal notes of his *Al-Imla' `an Ishkalat Al-Ihya'* (p. 103) in the section on "The Status of Those Who Merely Utter the Two Testimonies of Faith," Al-Ghazali said:

> There is a fourth group who had no knowledge of monotheism, but when they lived among Muslims, they were advised to utter the Two Testimonies of Faith and act upon them. They said, "We do not understand the implications of these testimonies." But their leaders commanded that they should consent. Upon this they uttered the Two Testimonies of Faith, while still ignorant of the beliefs behind them. It is hoped that this group will not be banished from the mercy of Allah and will be saved from perpetual

> torture in Hellfire. Therefore, judging that these people will be among the denizens of Hell may be passing judgment on the Unknown of Allah.

Sheikh Rashid Rida commentd on the above-mentioned delight of Imam Muhammad `Abduh for the hadith which indicated that it is only one sect that will be doomed to the Hellfire. Sheikh Rashid said that the narration of this hadith is not sound. He asserted that Imam Muhammad `Abduh expressed delight because he had gone so far in studying scholastic theology, philosophy, and mysticism, and finally was guided to the views adopted by the *Salafi* School.

I say, however, that Imam Muhammad `Abduh's hope that only one sect will be doomed to Hell is supported by a hadith reported by Ahmad. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "My nation will be separated into two sects, and some among them will go astray and deviate from my way. But those who went astray will rightly be killed at the hands of the first sect."

Actually, Imam Muhammad `Abduh set the method that should be followed in matters of belief:

> Both Islamic *shari`ah* and the human mind recommend only one way to reach absolute Truth. This

is to contemplate the universe and try to get sound and convincing evidence for the existence of the Only One Who created it from nothing. Then, proceed to provide proofs for the authenticity of the prophethood of all prophets. Once having belief in prophethood, one should accept everything attributed to the Prophet without analyzing the words, believe in them, and apply them. Then, one should go to verify his beliefs by finding solid evidence for all of them. Then, after verification, if he finds that his verifications do not contradict the outward of the divine words, he should stop, celebrating the praises of Allah. Otherwise, he should deal with interpretation and keep to the Qur'anic verse ❴*We believe in it, it is all from our Lord*❵ (Al-Imran, 7). This is because it is only Allah and His Messenger who know the true meaning of what Allah and His Messenger have said. Yet, there is no blame for anyone to adopt interpretation as a means to refute heretics' allegations or to convince a polytheist.

This should be the way all Muslims follow to achieve Allah's satisfaction with them. This method works to establish one's beliefs on firm ground supported by evidence, once he has taken divine revelation for

granted and believed in it from the depth of his heart. It was the same way followed by our sheikhs, such as Sheikh Al-Ash`ari, Sheikh Abu Mansur Al-Maturidi, and their like. They used to not accept any saying unless they supported it with as much evidence as they could. And this is what it means to be Sunni, Sufi, or wise. On the other hand, there is no doubt that every disputant who raises adversity in the word will be in the Fire, and every negligent one is disgraceful. Therefore, we should follow the way of our righteous predecessors (*Salaf*), and leave out everything else.

In addition to that, and to achieve salvation and eternal happiness, one must neglect vices of all kinds and abide by morality and virtuous acts, such as doing good and being just. For sure everything that contradicts the teachings of Prophet Muhammad—which include justice, good manners, and righteous behavior—and the course of his Companions will lead its doer to Hellfire. In contrast, following the Prophet's tradition and acting as did his Companions will safety take one to the highest ranks in Paradise.

One who follows the right way taught by the Prophet may go through either of two channels. He may base

> his acts on the Qur'an, the Prophet's tradition, and the wise sayings attributed to the Companions and virtuous people. Or he may go the same way and, in addition, verify his beliefs by evidence and searching for the truth wherever it may be until he reaches the highest degree of belief in this life and gets a sure abode with the Almighty Sovereign in the Hereafter. While both groups can be included in the title "True Believer", adherents of the first channel are wise and moderate believers, but the second group is a Sufi one seeking higher ends. And both channels will achieve salvation, for both go on the way drawn by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Finally, one should be earnest in following the right path to achieve happiness now and in the Hereafter, and Allah knows everything best.

Through this deep, unique verification and genius study, Imam Muhammad `Abduh has clearly explained the correct method for belief and successfully combined rational thought, text, and acts. He has also warned against blind imitation and the defect of repetition without understanding.

In his lectures on scholastic theology and commentary of the Qur'an, Imam Muhammad `Abduh declared his own choice

in belief. This was reported by his student Sheikh Rashid Rida in his *Al-Manar* (vol. 1, p. 253). Sheikh Rashid said:

> Having clarified both the ways of the *Salaf* (righteous predecessors) and the *Khalaf* (later scholars), Imam Muhammad `Abduh declared, "I am on the path of the *Salafi* and adopt their views of taking texts telling about Allah, His attributes, and the Unseen for granted. But to understand Qur'anic verses in the best way possible, I adopt the principles of both parties, for I believe that every word should have a useful meaning tp impart and that Allah would never address His servants with something not useful."

Being a graduate of the Faculty of Islamic Theology (when that was its main role), and having gone so far in studying philosophy and scholastic theology, and having spent a long time in practical experience in the field of *da`wah*, I conclude the following:

- Studying philosophy and scholastic theology is vital and effective for the students of Islamic *da`wah* in broadening their minds.

- *Shari`ah* texts should be held as sanctified as they are, and human intellectual activities should be respected and taken into consideration.

- Islamic *shari`ah* is a brother of sound mind. It is not inconsistent with it nor does it violate it.

- Philosophy and scholastic theology have contributed to understanding Islam and knowing its great value in rational deduction.

- Scholastic theology has also contributed to pursuing and fighting extraneous and non-Islamic concepts that oppose it and are contradictory to its nature.

- Scholastic theology is a victory for Islam by making the optimum use of human reason, for it gives it power that glorifies it and increases its dominance. Besides being a scholastic duty, it is also a religious duty that represents a powerful channel for calling for Islam and raising the Word of Allah high above any others'. Scholastic theology is an influential science that affects proponents as well as opponents. When I was in America and took this study as a method, especially while they were celebrating Christmas, it had a profound effect on Muslims and others.

- And this study reveals that this method followed by the Muslim intellectuals and wise men has achieved the greatest glory in defending Islam and showing its advantages and high status over all other faiths.

- Another great advantage, which is not revealed without understanding philosophers and wise men, is that relying on scholastic theology without the Islamic method does not take you to Truth or certainty. And it was a blessing of Allah that I reached this conclusion and declared it to my prestigious professors in this field.

- Islam is a religion that respects human intellect and rational effort and does not restrict it, even if they disagree.

- Studying scholastic theology gives much psychological happiness to those interested in it and deepens their belief in the supremacy of the Islamic method and way of thinking over all others. This happiness, which this life and all it holds do not change, is a fruit of all the comparisons and measurements between the intellectual methods and that of Islam. This gives more zeal to scholastic theologians to spare no effort for the sake of spreading Islam, however intense the hardships they might encounter.

It is a wonder then, that some people unjustly attack such field of knowledge and ignorantly degrade its status among other branches of knowledge. Their works, such as *Sharh Al-`Aqidah At-Tahawiyah*, are full of warnings not to study anything else other than the Qur'an and the Prophetic tradition.

I wonder about their position and am sorry for them. Allah willing, there will be further research on this.

## (15)

## IS IT A SALAFI DOCTRINE

## TO STUDY ONLY THE QUR'AN?

**1.** Thus they have said, and other things like it!

Once while speaking in America, my words were interrupted by someone exclaiming that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) reproached `Umar bin Al-Khattab for reading a page of the Torah and said to him, "Were Prophet Moses still living, he would have done nothing but follow me." This was on the occasion of my speaking on comparative religions and the necessity for them to take advantage of their residence in America to learn from its civilization whatever would be useful for their religion and the Muslim nation. And this was their answer and their thought!

I said to the interrupter, "`Abdullah bin `Amr, who reported the largest number of hadiths, was given a large number of

books written by Jews and Christians. He studied the books and reported some of them." But the one who interrupted me replied, "I have nothing to do with this."

I said, "Most of the Prophet's Companions reported traditions on the authority of some of the People of the Book such as Ka`b Al-Ahbar and Wahb bin Munabbih and his brother Hammam bin Munabbih, after whom Al-Bukhari reported hadiths." But the one who interrupted me replied, "I have nothing to do with this."

I gave more examples: Imam Al-Ghazali wrote *Ar-Radd Al-Jamil `ala An-Nasara min Al-Injil* (*Refuting Christian Allegations from Their Gospel*).

Trying to clarify which of the Prophet's names, Muhammad or Ahmad, had come first, Imam Ibn Al-Qayim quoted the name "Mad" from the Book of Genesis of the Bible and reported its explanation as found in the Torah. Ibn Al-Qayim also wrote a book entitled *Hidayat Al-Hayara fi Ajwibat Al-Yahud wa An-Nasara* (*Guiding the Perplexed to Refute Jewish and Christian Allegations*). Moreover, in his commentary on Imam As-Suhaili's record of the Prophet's biography, Ibn Al-Qayim quoted a text from the Torah to verify the Prophet's name.

Ibn Taimiyah, the teacher of Ibn Al-Qayim and of the highest distinction in the sciences of hadith, wrote his encyclopedic work, *Al-Jawab As-Sahih liman Badd Ad-Din Al-Masih* (*Sound Refutation of the Christians Who Changed the Faith of Jesus Christ*).

And before Ibn Al-Qayim and Ibn Taimiyah, Imam Ibn Hazm wrote his masterpiece, *Al-Fasl fi Al-Milal wa Al-Ahwa' fi An-Nihal* (*Division in Faith and Individual Inclination in Beliefs*).

Imam Muhammad `Abdul Karim Ash-Sharistani, born after the death of Ibn Hazm, also wrote his textbook *Al-Milal wa An-Nihal* (*Faith and Belief*), in which he discussed the religions of the world.

Comparative religions have continued to occupy a large portion of Muslim thought. Later Muslim generations have studied, learned, and taught the subject up to the present day. Examples in our modern age include Sheikh `Abdul Wahhab An-Najjar, who worked in the Faculty of Islamic Theology as a professor of Christianity and Judaism in the 1930s.

Then, and in the same faculty, Sheikh Muhammad Abu Zahrah delivered lectures on comparative religions in general

and Christianity in particular. It was at his hands that I studied my course on the subject. I also studied under Professor Dr. Muhammad Ghallab, who pioneered the field of Greek philosophy and ancient Eastern religions.

Later on, Sheikh `Abdul Halim Mahmud, Sheikh of Al-Azhar, translated from French the book *Al-Masihiah Nasha'tuha wa Tatawruha* (*Rise and Evolution of Christianity*). Then appeared *Iddhar Al-Haqq* (*Manifesting Reality*), a masterpiece by Sheikh Rahmat Allah Al-Hindi. Sheikh Rashid Rida said about this book, "It is the best book ever written on the subject." Moreover, Sheikh Rashid used this work as a reference for studying Christianity and Judaism.

Actually, Sheikh Al-Hindi wrote his book in reaction to a stubborn campaign launched against Islam by the colonial powers to raise doubts in the faith of Indian Muslims. The book showed the glories of Islam, verified evidence for the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him), and proved the falsehood of the Bible and its human nature. Sheikh Al-Hindi's book represented a revolutionary act against the missionaries supported by the colonial powers in the Islamic world.

Last but not least, Sheikh `Abdur-Rahman Zadat wrote *Al-Fariq bain Al-Makhluq wa Al-Khaliq* (*Key Differences Between the Creator and the Created*). Also, Al-Qarafi authored *Al-Ajwibah Al-Fakhirah* (*Sound Refutation*), and Al-Hakim As-Samau'al wrote *Badhl Al-Majhud fi Ifham Al-Yahud* (*Sparing No Effort to Refute the Jews*).

Then I said to the one who had interrupted my lecture, "Did all these great Muslim scholars who lived in distant eras transgress the right way and go against the Prophet's hadith? Or is it that you have better knowledge of the Prophet's hadith than his Companions and later Muslim scholars up to the present day?" His answer was the same: "I have nothing to do with this."

**2.** Upon my return from America, someone invited me to attend a Friday sermon that he would deliver himself. The subject matter of the sermon was that to be a true Muslim one should wear a *jilbab*, let his beard grow, and study only the Qur'an and Sunnah, being committed to the *Salaf* (righteous predecessors) in understanding both sources of the faith. He supported his views by saying that Salah Ad-Din could not regain Jerusalem from the Crusaders until he wore a *jilbab* and let his beard grow.

I do not take such sayings as ridiculous or nonsense because I know that it is their method, adopted a long time ago, of which they are convinced and for which they are ready to argue. Yes! They believe that only those who wear a *jilbab* and let their beards grow will be able to regain Jerusalem from the Jews! On page 26 of his book *Hiwarat ma` Urubiyin Ghair Muslimin* (*Discussions with Non-Muslim Europeans*), Dr. `Abdullah Qadiri, a Saudi scholar, said:

> Many of the Saudi students criticize Sheikh `Abdul Majid Az-Zinadi's adoption of scientific approaches in calling for Islam and showing the scientific inimitability of the Qur'an. They claim that it is enough to call for Islam only by texts from the Qur'an and Prophetic Sunnah.

**3.** Actually, it is a trend supported by writings pretending to follow the footsteps of the *Salaf*, our righteous predecessors. The Riyadh General Presidency of Research Departments published a booklet under the title *Majmu`at Rasa'il wa Fatawa* (*Collection of Messages and Fatwas*). This booklet refutes the sayings of anyone who accuses their scholars of hypocrisy and flattery to rulers. It asserts that yielding to rulers is an injunction ordained by the Qur'an as well as Prophetic tradition. According to this booklet, the Prophet

forbade open repudiation of rulers' tyranny if it would lead to rebellion against the rulers. It is claimed that obedience to rulers is the source of the dispute between the People of the Sunnah and the Kharijites and Rafidites [two splinter groups]. The booklet includes a number of hadiths telling about obedience and pledging allegiance to rulers. The booklet also exhorts Muslims to have no relation of any kind with non-Muslims; rather they should take them as enemies and make enmity the basis for any relations with non-Muslims.

Now, let us discuss the contents of this booklet in brief. Let us ask: Which one of the Muslim rulers in modern ages came to power through a public pledge of allegiance? What about the consensus among Muslim scholars that among the Kharijites there were some good people? Did Al-Husain (May Allah be pleased with him) transgress in his revolt against the rulers' tyranny? What about the Prophet's hadiths commanding Muslims to act against rulers' injustice? Didn't he stipulate the ruler's acting according to the Qur'an and Prophetic Sunnah as a provision to have the right of obedience over his subjects? Didn't he say that the master of martyrs, after Hamzah, is whoever is killed by a tyrant for

exhorting him to act according to the teachings of Islam? Didn't he enjoin mutual advice over his followers?

After the Prophet's death, Muslim caliphs adhered to the same way. Didn't Abu Bakr, the first imam of the *Salaf* after the Prophet (peace be upon him), in his first speech as caliph say, "...But if I mislead the way, you have to correct my errors"? Didn't `Umar "Al-Faruq" say, "Whoever sees me act unjustly is commanded to advise me"? Didn't one of his subjects answer him, "If we see you err, we will advise you, but if you don't yield we will fight you with the sword"?

It is clear that these people misunderstood the principle of the People of the Sunnah of renouncing resistance. People of the Sunnah recommend that if resistance will bring about a more dangerous reaction, it is useless and thus should not be the course of action. This is the application of the juristic rules related to contradiction between preventing evil and bringing good and taking the lighter risk. This misunderstanding led them to support injustice and tyranny. In this way Muslims have lost their powers only to become models of backwardness, arbitrariness, and autocracy, while non-Muslims enjoy democracy, mutual consultation, and respect for mankind. It is a wonder that this happens before the eyes of scholars who attribute their follies to religion!

The essence of monotheism, about which they speak, denies man's corruption and his submission to other than Allah. Can this essence agree with accepting injustice and allowing tyrants to stay merely because they are members of the Muslim community? How can tyrants who make or contribute to injustice be Muslims while the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Whoever cheats (or commits perfidy) is not of us"?[1] Some scholars said that the hadith is concerned with one who deceives in buying and selling. How then will be the case of one who deceives a whole nation?

Verily, it is this wrong education that paved the way for Muslims today to accept injustice, as it encouraged scholars who live in royal courts to issue the *fatwa* permitting tyrant rulers to seek the assistance of Western Christian powers against a Muslim nation. Upon their arrival to the Muslim world, Christians took away the riches of some Muslim Arab countries and, moreover, obliged them to pay the Christians the price for the destruction of their own countries. Woe to our scholars!

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[1]Reported by Muslim, Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, and Ahmad.

The booklet asserts that the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded Muslims not to forbid injustice if it leads to rebellious acts against the rulers. But I do not know and I cannot imagine a hadith that prohibits such a forbiddance. Rather, I do know different authentic hadiths. It is reported that Anas asked the Prophet, "When will Muslims refrain from enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil?" The Prophet replied, "When appears among you what appeared among the Children of Israel: when flatterers be the best among you, when atrocity becomes widespread among the wicked, when the young come to power, and when the mean become jurists."[2]

It is an evident contradiction of this group that they made obedience to rulers, even tyrants, a fundamental principle of Islam while publishing a booklet called *Sabil An-Najah* (*The Way of Salvation*) as a revolt against the Ottoman Turks, the legal rulers of the Muslim world, who wanted to subdue Najd. Where is the obedience that they made the core of Islam?

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[2]The author of *Al-Manar* said that Al-Hafidh reported and verified it (*Al-Manar*, vol. 8, p. 398).

**4.** Now, let us go back to our major topic, rejecting the study of other than the Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunnah. They support their views with some Qur'anic verses such as ❮*We have neglected nothing in the Book*❯ (Al-An'am, 38) and ❮*And We have explained everything (in detail)*❯ (Al-Isra', 12). Also, they take as evidence some Prophetic hadiths such as the one reporting the Prophet's displeasure with 'Umar's reading the Torah. Their justifications also include some generalities such as that implied in Sadr Ad-Din's introduction to *Sharh At-Tahawiyah.* He said, "Allah has explained everything in the Qur'an and perfected the religion for the Prophet and his nation." They give the following poetic verses attributed to Al-Shafi'i (May Allah be pleased with him) as support for their view:

Leave out all kinds of study but the Qur'an
Except for the hadith and jurisprudence,
For true study is that taken by transmission,
While others are Satanic illusions.

As for the generalities in the Qur'an, they should not be taken in their surface meaning. Otherwise, we would say that the Qur'an does not clearly state the amount to be paid as *zakah*, nor does it explain the details of the Five Pillars of Faith. For example, a Qur'anic verse says ❮... *destroying all*

*things by the command of its Lord*❵ (Al-Ahqaf, 25), while it could destroy only what Allah permitted it to do. On this basis came the answers of Ahmad, the Imam of the People of the Sunnah, to Judge Ishaq bin Ibrahim during the trial of Khalq Al-Qur'an [saying that the Qur'an is a created object although it is the words of Allah, the Creator]. Judge Ishaq asked Imam Ahmad, "Isn't Allah the Creator of everything?" (meaning that the Qur'an is one of these things). But the Imam replied, "Didn't Allah say ❴... *destroying all things*❵ while it could destroy only what Allah permitted it to do?"

The generality here is that the Book (the Qur'an) includes the detailed explanation of religious rules and judgments that Allah wished it to include. But if "the Book" is interpreted to refer to the Preserved Tablet, it is beyond the scope of our current study.

Likewise, there is a generality in the verse ❴... *And We have explained everything (in detail)*❵. It means everything that Allah wished to explain, whether related to religion or worldly matters. This verse is mainly concerned with the vastness of Allah's knowledge, not with the Qur'an, for Allah comprehends everything in the universe, and everything goes according to its destiny. Nothing ever happens accidentally. Also, there is a generality in the verse

❬*And We have revealed to you the Book expounding all things...*❭ (An-Nahl, 89), that is, everything related to religious matters. We understand the Qur'anic text either by its explicit wording or by referring to the Prophet's tradition, since we are commanded to follow his teachings and since Allah has addressed him saying ❬*that you may make clear to mankind what was sent for them*❭ (An-Nahl, 44).

Going back to those refraining from any study other than the Qur'an, they justify their opinion by the fact that the human mind is finite with restricted powers. But, we say, this finiteness does not invalidate its work. As for those who act only upon texts without understanding, they do not follow the Islamic method.

They stubbornly act upon the surface meaning of the hadith telling about 'Umar's reading in the Torah and the Prophet's displeasure with it, while leaving out a explicit hadith in which the Prophet said, "There is no blame on you if you report from the Children of Israel." Explaining this hadith, Al-Hafidh said the Prophet meant that there is no blame on reporting from the Jews, after he had previously prohibited taking traditions from them. This means that the Prophet's prohibition occurred at the beginning of the Islamic era when Islamic rulings and judgments were still immature. It came

to prevent disturbance. Then, the reason having disappeared, the Prophet allowed his followers to take stories from the Jews so that they might take them into consideration.

I think that this justification concluded by Al-Hafidh goes according to the principle of linking judgments to the reasons behind them, and once the reason comes to an end, the judgment terminates. Actually, the Prophet's permission for his Companions to report after the Children of Israel is further supported by his habit of telling them about past generations, saying, "In past generations, such-and-such happened." An example of this is the hadith reported by Bukhari and Muslim: Allah wanted to test three persons from the Children of Israel, one of whom was bald, one blind, while the third was leprous.

As for the poetic verses attributed to Imam Ash-Shafi`i and other sayings attributed to the imams of the People of the Sunnah, they come within the domain of the general command to refrain from scholastic theology that neglects the Qur'an and the Sunnah and totally depends on the human mind to realize matters of the Unseen such as matters related to the divine entity of Allah, prophethood, and events of the Day of Judgment. It can never be taken as an absolute prohibition to make use of this intellectual activity that takes

divine texts into consideration. Imam Ahmad, the model to be followed in sticking to texts, did not refuse scholastic theology that takes Qur'anic and Prophetic texts into consideration.

In the first volume of *Mu'jim I'lam Al-Fikri Al-Insani*, it is reported that Imam Ahmad's firm stand during the ordeal of Khalq Al-Qur'an [whether the Qur'an is a created object] indicates his individual concepts of some of the subjects tackled by scholastic theology. This is something that should be considered from the historical point of view.

Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal published two books that might be taken as a reference to depict his scholastic method. These books are *Ar-Radd `ala Al-Jahmiyah wa Az-Zanadiqah* and *Kuttab As-Sunnah*. Both works include some of the imam's views on some of the controversial issues he raised in refutation of the Jahmiyite and Mu`tazilite sects. Although Imam Ahmad did not set out to make a rational logical endeavor to justify his opinion, he tried to refute his opponents' ideas by interpreting some Qur'anic verses according to his school of jurisprudence. For example, he interpreted the verse ❬*We have made it an Arabic Qur'an*❭ (Az-Zukhruf, 3). According to Imam Ahmad, the word "made" (*ja`ala*) does not mean "create" (*khalaqa*). Rather,

he said that it is one of the acts, other than creation, ever undertaken by Allah. He made it easy for reading in Arabic.

Imam Ahmad also interpreted the word "*dhikr*" [here translated "message"] in the verse ❮*Whenever there comes to them a renewed Message from their Lord...* ❯ (Al-Anbiya', 2) to mean a reference to (or remembrance of) the Prophet. This verse is taken as a proof for the plea that the Holy Qur'an is a created object. Yet, Imam Ahmad believed that it tells about the Prophet, not about the Holy Qur'an. At the beginning the Prophet (peace be upon him) had no knowledge, so Allah taught him everything He wished.

**5.** In conclusion, based on Qur'anic verses, Prophetic hadiths, and traditions traced back to the Companions, nothing is found to prohibit studying sciences and branches of knowledge other than the Holy Qur'an. Rather, we are commanded to seek knowledge in all fields, especially practical sciences that give more power to the Muslims so as to prevent their enemies from taking away their riches.

Again, we have found no evidence for the pleas that Muslims should make war and enmity the basis for any relation with non-Muslims. On the contrary, authentic texts and actual practices of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his

Companions indicate the opposite. The following are some proofs from the Holy Qur'an to refute this view:

- Allah has made people's cooperation and acquaintance with one another one of His signs in the universe. In the following Qur'anic verse, He addresses all mankind, not only the Muslim community:

> ❴*O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes, that you may know one another.*❵
>
> (Al-Hujurat, 13)

- Allah has also commanded Muslims to keep peace with the peaceful. He says in the Qur'an:

> ❴If they withdraw and desist from fighting you, and offer you peace, then Allah assigns no way to you against them.❵
>
> (An-Nisa', 90)

- Also, Allah has permitted the Muslims to war only to defend themselves and resist aggression. He says in the Qur'an:

﴾*And fight the unbelievers all together even as they fight against you all together, and know that Allah is with those who are pious.*﴿

(At-Taubah, 36)

- It is a wonder that those who exhort Muslims to be in continuous enmity with non-Muslims take only the first part of this verse (At-Taubah, 36) as a proof for their plea. They frequently recite ﴾*And fight the unbelievers all together*﴿ and stop reciting the reason for war ﴾*even as they fight against you all together*﴿. Also, they always forget the ending part of the same verse: ﴾*and know that Allah is with those who are pious*﴿.

**6.** Now, let us investigate the life story of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the good example for all Muslims to follow, to see how he acted with non-Muslims.

- According to Imam Al-Bukhari, the Prophet contracted an agricultural partnership not only with some of the People of the Book, but with polytheists as well. Al-Bukhari devoted a separate chapter in his *Sahih* for that topic: "Partnership with People of the Book and the pagans in share-cropping."

- The Prophet also made a financial transaction with a Jew. He borrowed some money from him and gave him his armor as a deposit. Again, there is a separate chapter in *Sahih Al-Bukhari*: "Mortgaging things to Jews and others."

- It is authenticated through Imam Al-Bukhari that the Prophet accepted a gift from some polytheists and gave a gift to polytheists. These acts of the Prophet came in compliance with the Qur'anic verse:

> ❴*Allah forbids you not with regard to those who have not fought you in the cause of Religion, nor expelled you from your homes, that you should be considerate and deal justly with them...*❵
>
> (Al-Mumtahanah, 8)

It is reported that the Byzantine emperor sent a long fur garment with sleeves hemmed with brocade, and the Prophet wore it. Also, 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab is reported to have sent fine cloth to his polytheist brother in Makkah.

- It is reported that the Prophet used to supplicate Allah for the polytheists so that they might accept Islam. Once it was said to him, "The Daus tribe has opposed Islam and spurned it." But he replied, "O Allah! Give Your guidance to the Daus tribe and make some of them bearers of guidance

for others." Again it was said to him, "O Prophet! Why don't you call down the curses of Allah upon the polytheists for resisting the true faith?" But he replied, "I have been sent to be a mercy to all people, not to call down curses upon them."

O Prophet! May my father, mother, and myself be ransom for you! Had I lived during your lifetime, I would have washed your feet with my hands, and, if you had allowed me, would have kissed you from head to toe.

Though this was the Prophet's clear way to reconcile the hearts of polytheists and the People of the Book so that they might convert to Islam, some people who claim to be followers of the Prophet adopt different ways in dealing with polytheists and the People of the Book. They recommend that Muslims should cut all relations with non-Muslim societies and call down curses upon them. Alas, they do this claiming that it is the Prophet's tradition and an Islamic injunction. When scholars try to convince them that their ways have nothing to do with the Prophet's guidance, they deny their sayings and refuse to listen to them. What is strange is that some of them adopt these views while living in non-Muslim countries such as America, working for non-Muslim employers, and enjoying all the aspects of modern civilization and welfare of these countries.

Furthermore, the Prophet had a general rule to act similarly to the People of the Book. He used to let his hair grow long and part it, similar to the style of the Jews and Christians then. These acts are reported after him through authentic chains of transmission. (See *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, The Book of Dress.)

As for financial transactions, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have purchased using Byzantine coins, which sometimes had pictures of their emperors on them. This is reported by Ibn Al-Qayim in his *I'lam Al-Muwaqqi'in*, vol. 2. In his *Ighathat Al-Lahfan*, Al-Maqrizi reported that the pre-Islamic Arabs used to deal with Byzantine gold and silver coins, which had pictures of emperors on them. In the Islamic era, Caliph 'Umar agreed to use Persian coins which had the picture of King Khausrau on them, but he commanded the phrases "There is no god but Allah", "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah", and "Praise be to Allah" be stamped on them. Sometimes coins had the name of Caliph 'Umar together with the picture of King Khausrau on them.

In the time of Al-Hajjaj, coins were minted by a Jew called Sumair. It is he who introduced measurements for the first time in the Islamic era. The coins he minted were in

circulation in Madinah, though they had pictures on them. Sa`id bin Al-Musayyab used to deal with these coins, seeing nothing wrong in them, in contrast to others.

It is upon the Prophet's practices that we should act. He (peace be upon him) imitated the behaviors of non-Muslims so long as they did not contradict Islamic teachings. During the Battle of the Trench, the Prophet agreed to Salman Al-Farisi's suggestion to dig a trench around Madinah to protect it against the attacks of the confederates. Having learned of the Prophet's agreement to dig the trench, all the Muslims and their allies, including the Jews, hurried to take part in the process.

It is known that Salman was originally Persian, and digging a trench was a practice of the Persians in times of war. After the battle, the Quraish leaders attacked such an action of the Muslims, claiming that it contradicted the Arab tradition of bravery and fighting until the end. But neither the Prophet nor his Companions paid heed to their claims. Rather, they honored Salman for his idea. Both the Muhajirun and the

Ansar declared, "Salman is one of us."[3] But the Prophet himself (peace be upon him) contradicted them saying, "Salman is a member of my own household." Being a member of the Prophet's household was a great honor bestowed upon Salman for his sincere advice and what it implied of making use of the practices of others, even if they were Magi or worshipers of fire!

As Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) accepted to make use of the means of defense adopted by non-Muslims, he also depended on their practical experience in matters of legislation. It is reported that the Prophet thought to prohibit men from having sexual intercourse with their wives during the period of suckling their babies, just to provide the babies with the necessary milk. But when he was told that it does not affect the baby, based on the practical experience of Christian Byzantines and Magi Persians, he accepted. For the second time, the Prophet acted upon the practical experience of other people, even if they were Christians, Jews, or Magi, so long as it did not contradict Islamic principles or harm Muslims.

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[3]Al-Hafidh bin Abdul-Bar, *Ad-Dur fi Ikhtisar Al-Maghazi wa As-Siyar*, p. 170 (Dar Al-Ma`arif).

Likewise, the Prophet applied the same concept in the way he dressed. Following the custom of his people, he wore clothes made by the Christians of Yemen, the People of the Book in Syria, and the Copts of Egypt. He also wore clothes with pictures of caravans on them. As for clothes, curtains, and carpets made by Christians and having pictures of crosses, Jesus, his mother, or the like, it is enough to tear the picture.

**7.** Early Muslims followed this tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and acted upon his teachings in accepting from others so long as it did not conflict with Islamic principles. They could cope with the changing circumstances and never hesitated to do new things not done by the Prophet and taste new experiences.

The application of this principle was clearly evident in two major events that took place during the caliphate of Abu Bakr. When Abu Bakr decided to fight against the apostates who had refused to pay the *zakah*, thus aiming to preserve the religion, 'Umar bin Al-Khattab opposed him. 'Umar based his view on the fact that there is no text which permits fighting against people who profess that there is no god but Allah, even if they withhold the *zakah*. But Abu Bakr convinced him that the phrase "There is no god but Allah"

implies some duties on those who believe in it, and *zakah* is one of these duties.

The second episode is represented in the arguments between Caliph Abu Bakr and `Umar bin Al-Khattab over the compilation of the Qur'an into one book. Abu Bakr was hesitant to do something not done by the Prophet, especially because there is no text supporting such action. But `Umar insisted that it was the only way to preserve the Qur'an after the death of most of its memorizers. At last Abu Bakr was convinced and ordered that the Qur'an be compiled in one book. It is worth mentioning that in both cases the course of considering intentions and requirements triumphed.

**8.** After the death of Caliph Abu Bakr, `Umar came to power. Caliph `Umar adopted the same method in both worldly and religious affairs.

- In matters of worship: He put an end to the argument over the Tarawih Prayer. He concluded that it consists of eight rak`ahs and sent this command to all the provinces of the Muslim state. He also unified people's opinion that the Funeral Prayer consists of four *takbirs*.

- In personal status law: He issued a *fatwa* that triple pronouncement of divorce is irrevocable. Also, he commanded that whoever divorces his wife irrevocably should provide her with a dwelling and regular expenses.

- In politics: He commanded that non-Muslim poor people living under Muslim rule should receive a regular support payment from the state treasury. He also agreed that a Muslim slave could provide asylum for non-Muslims.

- In administration: 'Umar was the first to keep a record of the fighters' names and salaries. He was also the first caliph to keep account books of the treasury.

**9.** After the period of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs, the Muslim state expanded greatly. Peoples of different origins and cultures embraced Islam. The Muslim world then became a collection of all races on earth, all believing in the same faith, abiding by the same constitution, and ruled by the same caliph. Though these people were of different thoughts, habits, and traditions, the Arab Muslims welcomed them and dealt with them as brothers. They did not oppose their brothers' diverse customs of dress because they knew that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had not kept to a certain kind of clothes. Why then should they impose a

rule upon themselves, especially if there is no evidence for such a rule? Then, let everyone dress in the way he likes so long as it does not transgress the limits set by Allah and His Messenger. It is important here to clarify that assimilation among these people of diverse races and habits helped the Muslims to direct the course of the world civilizations.

Is it not a miracle that this collection of people was unified under the same banner of the Muslim state? At first, they were greatly different in beliefs, languages, races, cultures, social traditions, and economic status. But once they unified their faith and agreed upon the principles governing their actions, they could conquer a large portion of the world and assimilate new communities. As for minor issues influenced by everyday changes and natural development of societies, they left it for the people to act according to what best suited them.

As a matter of fact, early Muslims did not conquer the world to unify peoples' way of dressing or change their social habits and local traditions. They endeavored to spread the true faith on earth. They spared no effort to impart the word of Allah to any place they could reach, even to China. They went out bearing the Qur'an and the tradition of the Prophet

(peace be upon him), keeping to morality and leaving out any kind of severity.

As for the conquered societies, they peculiarly welcomed their new brothers (not conquerors) because they were greatly impressed by their high morality, spirit, and justice. They realized their truthfulness as supported by speedy victory over their enemies. Also, they welcomed them because they found ideal solutions for their social and economic deficiencies in the new faith that treats the slave on equal terms as his master and justly takes from the rich to give to the poor. They were given pledges that no one was obliged to change his faith. Rather, they had full freedom to practice their religious rituals and maintain their houses of worship.

How could such conquerors speak about such trivial issues as peoples' way of dressing?

While the conquered societies welcomed Muslim victories and embraced Islam to acquire more spiritual confidence, the Arab conquerors sought to make use of the cultures of these societies. Thus, both parties benefited from the other. Victory could not remove the natural differences between those races; yet, because the Arab conquerors were greatly

impressed by the civilizations of these countries, they respected the monuments found in Egypt, Syria, and Persia and did not break any of them, even if they had religious significance.

This led to the unification of the conquered and conquerors. Both raised a great civilization that derived its spiritual strength from the Islamic creed, while it gained its physical power from different philosophies, cultures, and arts of these societies. Later on, Baghdad became the capital of the Muslim world, extending over the largest portion of the ancient world.

From the psychological point of view, in their attempt to show the glory of their civilizations, the conquered people spared no effort to produce the best in all fields. The conquerors appreciated this and respected their civilizations. They were not reluctant to make use of any aspect of such civilizations, unless it went against their Islamic principles, an attitude that added to Islam.

It is true that stagnation of thought is the most fatal disease of the human mind. It imposes backwardness on man and leaves him out of step with the times, urging him to refuse anything new. There is no doubt that some people endeavor

to impose this stagnation on Islamic thought. Unfortunately, they call for this in the name of philosophy and religion.

**10.** There was an active interaction between the Arab Muslims, with their faith, morality, and the structure of the state, and the conquered peoples, with their civilization, thought, and art. The victorious Arabs showed great respect for the customs and traditions of the conquered societies. They never thought to oblige them to change their way of life. Rather, they sometimes shared in their ceremonies and festivals.

- According to *Al-Istiy`ab fi Asma' Al-Ashab*, Mu`awiyah (May Allah be pleased with him) was the first caliph to use the register of signets and he ordered the distribution of gifts on the occasion of the Nairuz festivals.

- In his Al-Kharaj, Abu Yusuf reported that Caliph `Umar bin `Abdul `Aziz ordered the officials who collected the *kharaj* [land tax collected from non-Muslim farmers living under Muslim rule] not to collect the tax on uncultivated land and not to exaggerate its amount on cultivated land. They were also commanded to reclaim barren land.

- The late Dr. Muhammad Husayn Haykal wanted to verify the question of a document written by Caliph 'Umar to the Nile, which, according to the Egyptians' idea, would cease to inundate unless they threw a virgin into the river, a custom which 'Amr bin Al-'As refused. In investigating the truth of this story, Dr. Haykal asked the assistance of Egyptologist Prof. Salim Hasan. The latter established that if the story were true that 'Umar threw a document into the river so that it would inundate but not to excess, it was to go along with the Egyptians in their custom, and he found no wrong in it. In the past, at the beginning of summer the priests and their kings used to sacrifice to their Nile god a bull, a goose, some bread, and other things. Then they used to throw into the river a sealed document on papyrus ordering the river to inundate but not to excess. It is clear that the Christians abstained from the sacrifices and only the document remained. Then when the Arabs entered Egypt, the first Islamic document traced by historians was this one, which historians attributed to 'Umar bin Al-Khattab, in which he did not order the river to run as the Byzantine prince and the priests used to do. If the story of 'Umar's document is true, he did it just to get along with the Egyptians in relation to a custom of their own that he saw as harmless. Besides, it caused no trouble for anyone.

According to *An-Nujum Az-Zahirah fi Akhbar Misr wa Al-Qahirah*, this story has been verified by Muslim historians.

The above story, whether authentic or not, indicates that Muslim conquerors did not have any religious impediment to grant freedom to the conquered societies to enjoy their customs and beliefs. Even those who raised doubts about this story never criticized it from the religious point of view. As for those who accepted it, they never blamed Caliph `Umar for signing the document.

- The same criterion can be applied to the Muslims' participation in the Persian festival of Nairuz, which can be found in Arabic poetry. It is true that this festival was a good occasion for Arab poets to speak about, as the Persian civilization had its effect on the literary and social life of the Arabs.

- Muslim Arabs wore the clothes of non-Arabs, including the Byzantine *tailasan* (pallium), which became the dress of high-class Arabs. Even the word "*tailasan*" has been assimilated into Arabic.

- As the Arab Muslims shared in the conquered peoples' festivals, so, too, they dined with Persian tradesmen, peasant

leaders, and provincial governors. They just followed the practices of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who is reported to have invited the polytheists of Makkah to his wedding banquet when he married Maimunah bint Al-Harith (May Allah be pleased with her).

- In addition to that, some Muslims are reported to have performed Prayer in churches, and some polytheists were permitted to spend the night in mosques. Ash-Shafi`i said, "There is no harm if a polytheist spends the night in any mosque except the Sacred Mosque (in Makkah)." Similarly, Al-Bukhari reported that Ibn `Abbas performed Prayer in synagogues and churches unless they contained statues. Abu Musa and `Abdul `Aziz also performed Prayer in a church.

- Furthermore, our predecessors used to ride on animals other than those known in Arabia, such as the Persian horses called *baradhin*, though they always took pride in Arabian horses, in which Arabic poetry had special interest. Also, they rode elephants, which the Persians used in their wars against the Arabs.

- In his *Ighathat Al-Lahfan*, Ibn Al-Qayim reported it is a feature of Islamic tolerance that the Prophet (peace be upon him) wore clothes made by polytheists and performed Prayer

in them, and they were probably dyed with urine. He and his Companions are reported to have made ablution from a water skin owned by a polytheist woman. He was asked what a Muslim should do if he does not find anything except a vessel used by the People of the Book for drinking wine or cooking pork. He said, "He can use it after washing it carefully." Later on, Muslim scholars used this report as evidence to support the view that vessels and utensils used by the polytheists are essentially pure.

- `Umar bin Al-Khattab is reported to have thought to prohibit Muslims from wearing certain clothes which had been dyed with urine. One of his attendees exclaimed, "Why should you when the Prophet himself is reported to have worn it and agreed that others wear it? Verily, if Allah had forbidden us to wear it, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) would have been the first to refrain from wearing it." Upon this Caliph `Umar said, "You are right."

- During his visit to Al-Jabiah, `Umar borrowed some clothes from a Christian person and made ablution from a water skin owned by a Christian woman.

- Two Companions of the Prophet, Abu Ad-Darda' and Salman Al-Farisi (May Allah be pleased with them),

performed Prayer in a house owned by a Christian woman. Abu Darda' asked her, "Is there any clean place here to perform Prayer in?" She replied, "Purify your hearts and perform Prayer anywhere you like." Upon this Salman said to his companion, "Accept her saying without referring to a jurist."

- Muslim Arabs lived in houses constructed by Christians in the conquered countries. In Egypt, `Amr bin Al-`As kept some of the Byzantine officials, who preferred to remain in Egypt under Muslim rule, in the offices they used to manage before the conquest. Also, he appointed Copts to the offices left vacant after the departure of the Byzantines.

From the above, we conclude that Muslims never hesitated to adopt and make use of the systems, customs, and traditions practiced in the conquered countries, so long as they agreed with the Islamic spirit and never contradicted their principles. They never rejected an inherited custom because it was inherited, or refused something new because it was new. Likewise, they did not prohibit exploring different fields of knowledge, based on the fact that the Qur'an includes everything. Those who newly converted to Islam were granted full freedom to act as their predecessors

while preserving their Islamic character. The constructive interaction between the Arab Muslims and the Muslims of the conquered regions contributed to the development of the nation to the extent that it became a Muslim, rather than an Arab, state.

**11.** Now, what would have happened if early Muslims had adopted the notion to study only the Qur'an and the Prophet's tradition? Definitely, Caliph `Umar, for example, would have introduced nothing new to his nation, nor would he have gained the title "Genius", as the Prophet said of him, "I've never seen a genius making such judgments." If `Umar and other members of the Muslim community had followed the trend of "What is said about..." searching for texts for everything, all people would have been the same, the jurist and the narrator, and the genius as the simple one. Are `Addy and `Umar the same? Or are Abu Hurairah and `Umar the same? But no, Islam never restricted individual talents. On the contrary, it strongly supported them by all possible means so that every one of the early Muslims had his own achievements.

The Qur'anic verses and the Prophetic sayings are not magical words that help man get everything while silencing human reason. Rather, they came to enlighten and refresh the

human mind to contemplate the universe and explore the signs of Allah.

Truly, belittling the signs of Allah in the universe does not elevate the signs of Allah in the Qur'an, and exalting the Holy Qur'an does not degrade the signs in the universe. This is simply because the One Who revealed the Qur'an is the same One Who causes clouds to move. Still, He is the same One Who commanded us to contemplate the Qur'an and the creation of the heavens and earth. No wonder about that, for the Qur'an is the only divine book whose verses come in conformity with the realities and secrets of the universe. How can we then refrain from studying natural sciences and all branches of knowledge, claiming that it is a religious act not to so refrain?

**12.** This issue with all its details can be summarized into three questions as follow:

1. Is it an Islamic concept to restrict the human mind?

2. What is the Qur'anic concept of knowledge?

3. What is the policy in *shari`ah*?

If we can rightly answer these questions, we shall definitely reach a sound conclusion to the whole issue.

As for the first question, the above pages of this chapter are a good answer. Islam, with its monotheistic faith, has given freedom to the work of the human mind, as it has given free will and called for the emancipation of slaves. We can summarize the Islamic call in these freedoms and liberation. In his *Tahdhib Al-Asma'*, An-Nawawi reported that a man came to Ash-Shafi`i and asked him for advice. Ash-Shafi`i replied, "Allah has created you free, so be free as Allah created you."

There is no more convincing proof of this than the Qur'an's call to the unbelievers to bring their evidence of the falsehood of the Islamic call. The words for "mind", "thinking", "contemplation" and their derivations are repeated tens of times in the Qur'an. It addresses men of understanding many times. Likewise, it acknowledges that only the wise can realize the secrets of the Qur'an and the universe. If anyone investigates the concordance of the Bible in search of words like "mind", "thinking", "contemplation", or their derivations, he will find nothing.

It is enough to know that Islam enjoins religious duties only on sane persons and lifts the orders from those who do not have the mental abilities.

The Qur'an addresses the human mind in all its faculties discovered by the psychologists of our modern age According to 'Abbas Al-'Aqqad (May Allah be merciful to him), these faculties are:

- the restraining mind that is responsible for giving orders and prohibitions;

- the intelligent mind that is responsible for comprehending all that goes on around man;

- the wise mind with which man concludes sound opinions and expresses himself in the best possible way;

- the rightly-guided mind, which occupies a higher status than the above three.

On these accounts, contemplation is an obligation in Islam because the mind that is considered and addressed in the Qur'an is not that which is opposed to insanity but that which is opposed to stupidity and mental stagnation. This is the truth because Islam excuses the insane and never enjoins

anything on them, but it rejects stupidity and the inflexibility of thinking that may lead people to go astray. Rather, it punishes whoever sticks to them.

The mind that is considered by Islam is the one that controls the human conscience, realizes the truth, distinguishes good from bad, makes sound comparison between different things, and wisely contemplates things before making a decision. This is why Islam refuses to suspend mental activities for reasons such as:

- customs, including ancestor worship and folk authority;
- blind following of examples, including religious authorities;
- humiliating fear, including the influence of time.

Also, this is the reason why Islam refuses that one establishes his faith on:

- imitation: ❮*We found our fathers following a way and we are only following in their footsteps*❯ (Az-Zukhruf, 23);
- imagination: ❮*Do you dispute with me about names which you and your fathers have invented?*❯ (Al-A`raf, 71);

- conjecture and desire: ❬*They follow only conjecture, and what the souls desire*❭ (An-Najm, 23);

- personal inclination: ❬*It is not according to your desires, nor the desires of the people of earlier Scripture*❭ (An-Nisa', 123).

Does anyone wish to have faith in a religion other than Islam, which declares that the human mind is free to explore the universe? This course suits the faculty of curiosity, which is instinctive in mankind. Islam does not prevent man from acquiring knowledge and assimilating new ideas, wherever this knowledge may be found.

There is no doubt Islam accepted good aspects found in the pagan society of Arabia as well as it rescued mankind from the evil of that society, whether in transactions, morality, or even law.

- Islam prohibited lewdness. The idolaters accepted secret lewdness, and despised it only when practiced in public. The Qur'an refers to this: ❬*not receiving intimates...* ❭ (An-Nisa', 25).

- Islam also prohibited the exchange marriage in which one would exchange his wife for another's and pay an additional amount of money.

- Also, Islam put an end to the *istibda'* marriage in which one would permit his wife to have sexual relations with another man.

- Islam prohibited the *`asharah* marriage in which a woman would have sexual intercourse with ten men and attribute the baby to whichever of them she liked.

- Also, Islam prohibited marriage to prostitutes.

Islam has accepted only one form of marriage, which is known in Muslim societies today.

Other practices of the pre-Islamic Arabs were accepted by Islam, such as the following:

- *Khul`*, a form of divorce in which the wife pays some amount of money for her freedom, was allowed by Islam.

- *Qisas* (retaliation) was accepted after removing the injustices linked to it among the idolaters of Makkah.

- *Qasamah* (compurgation) in murder cases was retained by Islam.

- Hospitality and bravery were among the moral values that were known in the pre-Islamic society of Arabia and kept by Islam.

- *Hilf Al-Fudul*: Before the Prophet proclaimed the Islamic call, the chieftains of the Banu Zahrah, Taim, and Asad tribes had called a conference in the house of `Abdullah bin Jud`an. They recommended the support of the oppressed, whoever and wherever they might be. The Prophet attended this conference while still a youth. After he had proclaimed the Islamic call, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) told his Companions about this conference and declared that if he were invited to a similar conference, he would certainly accept it.

Thus the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught his Companions, and all Muslims by implication, to take from others what fits with their circumstances and complies with the Islamic principles.

This can be further supported by a hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in which he said, "Seek knowledge

even if it is found in China, for seeking knowledge is obligatory on all Muslims [males and females]." This hadith is reported by `Abdul Barr in his *Bayan Fadl Al-`Ilm* and by As-Sayuti in his *Ad-Durar Al-Muntathirah.*

**13.** This leads us to discuss the second question: What is the Qur'anic concept of knowledge? Speaking about the Islamic emphasis on and special interest in knowledge is redundant, since it is referred to in the Qur'an hundreds of times. Therefore, our question inquires about the nature of knowledge referred to in the Qur'an. Is it religious knowledge only? We shall pick just two verses to know the Qur'anic concept of knowledge and people of knowledge as well.

> ﴾*Have you not seen how Allah sends down water from the sky, and with it We bring forth a variety of fruits of various colours? And in the mountains are streaks white and red and various shades of colour, and jetblack. And also among mankind and creatures and cattle, diverse are their colours too. Surely those of His servants who have knowledge fear Allah alone. Indeed! Allah is Almighty, All-Forgiving.*﴿
>
> (Fatir, 27-28)

What kind of people who have knowledge does the above Qur'anic verse refer to? Is it not enough that Allah mentions His graces bestowed on the universe for all His servants in general and the sincere among them in particular? In another verse Allah says:

> ❬*And We have bestowed upon David bounty from Us: "O mountains and birds, echo Allah's praises with him." And We softened the iron for him. "Make coats of mail..."*❭
>
> (Saba'a, 10-11)

Here Allah mentions the graces He bestowed on Prophet David, juxtaposing the worldly aspect of making iron soft for him to earn his living making armor with the purely religious grace of having birds and other creatures celebrate the praises of Allah along with him.

Telling about Solomon, son of David, Allah says:

> ❬*And We made a fountain of molten brass to flow for him*❭
>
> (Saba'a, 12)

The liquid brass harmonizes with the iron made soft for his father. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) told us,

"The most lawful food man ever eats is that which he earns from the work of his own hands."

In another verse of the Qur'an, Allah says:

> ﴾*And We sent down iron, wherein is great strength, and many uses for mankind, so that Allah might test who strive for Him and His Messengers, in the Unseen...*﴿
>
> (Al-Hadid, 25)

Who, then, will study mineralogy and investigate the benefits of iron for Muslims? How can we then raise our faith to the highest degree if we leave these sciences for non-Muslims?

Alas, some Muslims take the issues of wearing the *jilbab* and letting the beard grow as life or death issues, while they live on the products of non-Muslims. In addition to that, they fight each other with arms made by their foes, thus consuming the nation's riches by paying it to the enemies. After all, they do not feel ashamed of their actions and ascend pulpits exhorting that no knowledge should be sought other than the Qur'an, and no dress should be worn other than the *jilbab*.

**14.** What kind of knowledge did Allah teach to Adam?

❮*Then He taught Adam the names of everything*❯
(Al-Baqarah, 31)

According to most commentators, the word "names" in the verse refers to the inner nature and qualities of everything. The particular qualities and feelings that were outside the nature of angels were put by Allah into the nature of man. Thus he became able to plan and initiate in order to undertake the task of being the vicegerent of Allah on earth, an office which the angels could not attain. Likewise, among the graces bestowed on Solomon is that he had a man endowed with such power to transport the throne of Bilqis to his court and transform it as he desired. This powerful action was undertaken by someone who had knowledge of the Book, while a stalwart of the jinn had failed to do it.

O you Muslims! This is your Book telling you everything in truth. How could you use it to say, "No knowledge should be sought other than the Qur'an, and no dress should be worn other than the *jilbab*"? Actually, both claims are false. In these pages we have proved the falsehood of the first claim, and now we come to refute the second.

I prefer to express the falsehood of keeping to only one kind of dress using the words of a trustworthy imam, Ibn Al-

Qayim. He refuted this point of view in two of his valuable works. In *Zad Al-Ma`ad* he said:

> It is an evident wrong act to keep to a certain type of clothing and believe that breaking it is wrong. Abu Ishaq Al-Asbahani reported that As-Salt bin Rashid came to Muhammad bin Sirin while wearing a *jubbah*, a wrapper, and a turban all made of wool. Upon this Muhammad bin Sirin said, "Unfortunately, there are some Muslims who commit themselves to wearing only woolen clothes because Jesus son of Mary wore them. This happens while the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have worn garments made of linen, wool, and cotton, and never kept to a certain type of clothes. It is known that we are commanded to follow the tradition of Prophet Muhammad, not Jesus."

Commenting on this episode, Ibn Al-Qayim said:

> Here, Muhammad bin Sirin referred to those who prefer to wear only wool, stick to only one type of clothing, prevent themselves from enjoying different types, and believe that it is a Sunnah of the Prophet. But the reality is that restricting oneself to only one

> kind of clothes is rejected and has nothing to do with the Prophet's tradition.

Again, in his *Ighathat Al-Lahfan*, Ibn Al-Qayim said:

> Whoever investigates the Prophet's tradition and life story will realize that he wore different kinds of clothes. He never committed himself to such-and-such type of clothing, nor did he command his Companions to do so.

Isn't there a big difference between the Prophet's tradition and the claims of these groups?

**15.** Theoretical inference was the general characteristic of Greek thought. They based it on logical analogy laid down by Aristotle. They had no interest in experimental approaches. Later on, when Muslim scholars studied Greek philosophy and had an account of their logic and its approaches of inference, they criticized it. In this domain, Ibn Taimiyah's *Ar-Radd `ala Al-Mantiqqi`in* is considered the greatest work of the Islamic tradition ever written on theoretical inference.

Unlike the Greeks, Muslim thinkers had an interest in the experimental approach and laid the foundations upon which Western philosophers, during the Renaissance, based this branch of knowledge. As later Muslim generations forgot the achievements of their predecessors, they received these aspects of European, originally Muslim, culture as great achievements in the history of humanity. Thus, the European's acquisition of foreign cultures marked their Renaissance, while the Muslims' forgetfulness marked the decline of their powers.

Actually, Muslim scholars' interest in experimental approaches was derived from the Qur'anic emphasis on contemplation of the symbols of Allah in the universe. It is noteworthy that natural scientists' study of the Qur'an increases their firmness of belief. According to the two books *Al-`Ilm Yahdi 'ilal-Iman* (*Science Leads to Faith*) and *Allah Yatajalla fi `Asr Al-`Ilm* (*Allah in the Age of Science*), careful exploration of the secrets Allah put in the universe urges people to have firm belief in Allah and thus deepens their belief in the miraculous nature of the Qur'an. This was proven true in the story of Maurice Bucaille, a French physician who converted to Islam thanks to his practical research. Bucaille gained a firm belief that the Qur'an is

revealed by Allah, the Creator of the universe, not the product of Muhammad's genius. All these ideas can be found in his comparative study, *The Bible, the Qur'an, and Science*.

It is a pity to find that a Westerner who was brought up to hate Islam converts to Islam through his study while at the same time some Muslims who claim to be monotheists hold the opinion that only the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet should be learned. Isn't there a similarity between this attitude and that adopted by the Church in the Middle Ages? The Church, which had dominated all aspects of life, fought fiercely against the introduction of the experimental approach. Great figures of human history fell victim to this struggle.

Again, a careful study of the Qur'an would conclude that the number of verses telling about knowledge is greater than those clarifying juristic rules. In his interpretation of the Qur'an, Sheikh Tantawi Jauhari said:

> Our predecessors carefully studied the juristic aspect of the Holy Qur'an. They concluded all rulings pertaining to such areas as faith, forms of worship, transactions, inheritance, crimes, and judgments. I

> wonder that they had little interest in the verses telling about the signs in the universe, which amount to 750 verses. It is our mission, then, to concentrate our effort to understand this portion of the Holy Qur'an and explain it to others. We should do that simply because there is no difference between the verse ❮*Say, "Look at what is in the heavens and the earth!*❯ (Yunus, 101) and the verse ❮*So pray to your Lord, and sacrifice to Him*❯ (Al-Kauthar, 2), for both verses are in the imperative form, which indicates obligation. As we have assimilated and acted upon the juristic verses, we have to understand the verses about the universe and apply them in their respective fields, be they agriculture, industry, commerce, or whatever. Allah says ❮*... to make it prevail over all religion...*❯ (At-Taubah, 33). Verily, Allah has supported this Islam with nature, thus enabling it to prevail over all religion. This is the advantage of being interested in the natural sciences and exhorting people to adopt them.

There is another social and political advantage of studying natural sciences. Sheikh Jauhari continues:

> Muslims divided into sects in their studies of politics and fiqh, but when they read various aspects of sciences which the Qur'an guides them to, there are no differences between them, for they are clear and apparent, and Allah is the One Who blessed them with these signs. Let the Muslims in the east and west read all the sciences which foreigners have been good at, and then they will see the differences they have in *shari'ah* are minor in relation to the things they agree upon. The natural sciences are like food and the sciences of *shari'ah* like medicine. How can a human being live on medicine only without taking food? Food is a continuous demand, but medicine is needed only when your health declines.[4]

I acquired this knowledge at the hands of venerable outstanding jurists and thinkers. Some of them were called upon to give lectures in Western universities, and some others have become the Sheikh of Al-Azhar. After graduation and through practical experience in the field of *da'wah*, I encountered great scholars specialized in different

[4] See Dr. Muhammad Muhammad Hussein, *Al-Itijahat Al-Wataniyah fi Al-Adab Al-Mu'asr*, vol. 2, pp. 334-336.

fields of knowledge. At the same time, I saw some people working in that honorable field, ascending pulpits here and there while ignorant of the right way drawn by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

**16.** Let us imagine that all Muslims were specialized in jurisprudence. Would they be in no need of agriculture or industry? Telling about the different branches of knowledge, Imam Al-Ghazali said:

> If you ask a jurist about such issues as *li`an* or *dhihar*, he will give you a detailed answer that could fill volumes. But if you ask him why he chose jurisprudence as a specialization, he would say because knowledge of religion is a collective duty. Why should most Muslims study the same branch of knowledge because it is a collective duty while leaving other fields that may be of more importance? How many Muslim villages are there that have no physicians except a Christian or even a Jewish one?

In his *Ghiyath Al-Umam*, Imam Al-Haramain said:

> I think that better rewards and higher degrees of good deeds will be granted for undertaking collective duties

than individual duties. This is based on the fact that people will individually be called to account for individual duties, that is, only one person will be either rewarded or punished. On the other hand, neglecting a collective duty may affect an entire community in a negative way. Therefore, all members of a society may be punished but to different degrees. In addition, collective duties may turn into individual ones in certain cases with certain people. When one finds a very hungry person on the verge of death and he can afford to give him food, it becomes an individual duty on that person to rescue the hungry.

Now, what is the judgment in *shari`ah* of those who say that only the Qur'an should be taught and that nothing is right except what the *Salaf* left behind, while we live in dire need of acquiring technology that promotes industry, agriculture, and arms manufacture? It is necessary for us to assimilate such fields to be able to defend our religion, society, wealth, honor, and reason. This necessity lies at the core of Islamic *shari`ah*. Besides, we are commanded by the Qur'an to maintain the optimum strength possible:

﴾*And prepare for them with whatever force you can, and with cavalry, to terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy with it*﴿

(Al-Anfal, 60)

Isn't this injunction enough exhortation for us to take this issue into consideration? How can we terrify our enemies while they are more powerful than we are? How can we prepare and make ready our strength while we import our basic needs from our enemies?

Is it logical that some Muslims concentrate all their intellectual powers to convince people that one should cut his mustache, let his beard grow, and wear a *jilbab*? Is this the end for which Allah sent Prophet Muhammad to all people? Has the Qur'an been revealed to teach people nothing but these three things?

In our modern age, the material weakness of the Muslim world came about because their enemies made more advances in the economic and industrial fields. On the other hand, the spiritual weakness of today's Muslim communities springs from the fact that they did not continue in the same way as their predecessors who had established a world-wide civilization and laid the foundations for today's European

and Western civilization. Meanwhile, the Europeans revolted against the Church and started to develop on the latest achievements of the Muslim genius.

It is important that Muslims realize that their enemies are keen to kill and bury forever any chance for them to progress. They spare no effort to keep the Islamic economic and military powers as weak as they can. Evidence for this can clearly be seen in the Iraq-Iran war, which was incited by those enemies. Then came the American conspiracy to annihilate the military power of Iraq and, at the same time, dominate the economic power of the Gulf States. Meanwhile, it is evident that Israeli military power is left to grow to the utmost and is given any support it needs in any field, at any time, to be able to dominate the Arab world. Ben-Gurion, the first Israeli prime minister, said, "We shall definitely conquer the Arab lands by tanks, or even by tractors if tanks are not possible." Meanwhile, it is ironic to find some Arab officials happily declare that but for Israel's agricultural technology, they would not be able to eat apples or bananas.

Though these realities are clear, and the Israeli military power is growing every day, some Muslims still not only claim but assure that only bearded Muslims who wear the

*jilbab* will be able to liberate Jerusalem from Israeli occupation. Truly, it pleases the Jews to have Muslims think this way. A poet said:

> Truly, if I were to have power
> And divide people into classes,
> I would deem some males as females
> And give their positions to other females.

**17.** The whole vision may become clearer with the answer to the third question: What is the policy in *shari`ah*?

This issue was raised in Islamic thought long ago. In his *At-Turuq Al-Hukmiyah* and *Bida'i` Al-Fawa'id*, Ibn Al-Qayim reported:

> Ibn `Aqil said: Running things in a politically legitimate (*shari`i*) way is through judiciousness (or firmness). No imam can do without it.
>
> A Shafi`i jurist said: There is no politics (or governing) except what agrees with *shari`ah*.
>
> Ibn `Aqil (Al-Hanbali) said: Politics (or governing) is what makes people closer to virtue and farther from corruption, even if it was not so set by the Prophet or

> through revelation. If by saying "except only that which agrees with *shari`ah*" you mean anything that is not contradictory to the *shari`ah*, then this is correct. If you mean only what was pronounced by the Law-Maker, then you are putting the Companions in the wrong. What the Rightly Guided Caliphs did in their governing the nation in their time was not in *shari`ah*.

Ibn Al-Qayim said:

> This is a slippery position and it is a position of difficulty and a battleground in which one group neglected and suspended the prescribed punishments and threw away rights.... Thus they rendered *shari`ah* helpless, incapable of fulfilling the interests of Allah's servants....When the rulers saw that and found that the people's condition would not improve except with something additional, they introduced political laws with which to regulate the affairs of the world. Another group went beyond all limits. They legitimized whatever was contrary to the prohibitions of Allah and His Prophet.
>
> Both groups rose from their deficiency in knowing what Allah sent to His Messenger....If the signs of

> justice appear in any way, this is the *shari'ah* of Allah and His religion. Allah the Exalted has not limited the paths of justice. But He showed that by whatever way He legitimized, He means to establish justice and fairness among people. So however I produce justice is of the religion.

I think that this is a comprehensive reasoning, based on careful understanding of Islamic *shari'ah* and its aims. It has successfully refuted the close-minded doctrine that no political course should be adopted unless it has a reference in Islamic *shari'ah*. The true best way is that found in the Qur'an and Prophetic Sunnah and concluded by intelligent Muslim jurists and statesmen so long as it follows the general principles set by Islamic *shari'ah*. Therefore, any science, action, or political course that achieves justice, brings about welfare and prosperity for Muslims, and does not violate Islamic teachings is totally welcomed. Thus the Companions acted during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and thus did the Rightly Guided Caliphs lead the Muslim nation after the Prophet's death.

What then is the source of what is included in the booklet *Sabil An-Najah* published by the Riyadh General Presidency

of Research Departments? The booklet concludes that Muslims should:

- ever yield in obedience to their rulers, even if they are tyrants;

- ever make enmity the basis for dealing, if necessary, with non-Muslims;

- never have clientship with non-Muslims or even speak their languages;

This last rule refers to a *maqtu`* hadith [one with an interrupted chain of transmission] attributed to `Umar in which he says, "Do not learn the languages of non-Arab people."

May Allah be merciful to Imam Al-Haramain Al-Juwaini as he said in his book *Ghiath Al-Ummah*, "Leaving people unguided without knowledge is more beneficial to them than to follow the guidance of those who support the unjust."

And may Allah have mercy on Imam Al-Bukhari who made a whole chapter of his *Sahih* under the title "Whoever Speaks in Persian." In this chapter, the Prophet (peace be

upon him) is reported to have pronounced some Abyssinian words.

The authors of the above-mentioned booklet unjustly claim that Ibn Taimiyah prohibited Muslims to learn languages other than Arabic, while he is reported to have issued a *fatwa* permitting the translation of the meaning of Qur'anic verses into different languages. I think that the issue of learning foreign languages is not in need of evidence. Hasn't Allah made peoples' variation in languages among His signs in the universe? How can Muslims who learn such a sign of Allah be accused of being loyal to non-Muslims? It is a pity that some Muslims adopt this view. O Allah, protect Your religion against the allegations of this group! Why shouldn't learning foreign languages be adopted as a legal political means to defend our faith against the enemies' conspiracies, if not as contemplation of the signs of Allah?

Now, let us consider the characteristics of the Muslim society as seen by this group:

- A society that studies only the Qur'an and the Prophet's Sunnah to have only jurists and qualified reciters of the Qur'an;

- A society that speaks only Arabic and refrains from studying foreign languages;

- A society that denies psychology and natural sciences;

- A society whose entire male membership is committed to letting their beards grow, wearing a *jilbab*, and ever holding a staff;

- A society that does not manufacture any kind of arms, believing that long beards and *jilbab* are the strongest arms ever owned;

- A society whose enemies know everything about it, even the habits of sleeping, drinking, and eating;

- A society that is ruled by unjust rulers and in which scholars teach people that revolting against unjust rulers is a non-Islamic act;

- A society whose religious knowledge is restricted to acts of worship;

- A society that believes that matters supported by explicit texts in the *shari`ah* are just and right, but others are not;

- A society in which students are exhorted to leave medical and engineering studies because they are prohibited;

- A society whose spokesmen accuse their opponents of violating the *shari'ah* requirements of righteousness and call them unbelievers, hypocrites, and flatterers;

- A society that deems the entire body of Islamic history to be forged except that which is related to those they consider as the *Salaf*;

- A society that accepts only what the *Salaf* deduced from the Qur'an and that denies all that other scholars may conclude;

- A society that makes war, hatred, and enmity the basis for any kind of relations with other societies;

- A society that considers acquaintance with non-Muslims to be loyalty to polytheists as prohibited in the Qur'an.

What kind of society might this be! One can realize the close similarity between such a society and Europe in the Middle Ages when the Church had exclusive power over peoples' minds.

**18.** Firm beliefs, a sound way of thinking, and a healthy psyche are the basic factors needed for the survival of any nation. Then come the material factors including wealth, power, and experimental science. Though material factors play a decisive role in the history of a nation, they come in second place after faith and thought. Complete destruction is the inevitable end of any nation that takes money, science, and power as bases for its civilization.

For me, what happened in Palestine is a great lesson for Muslims to learn from the story of the Jews. The Jews in the modern age did not have a homeland to dwell in and thus were scattered throughout the globe. Yet, because they held fast to their beliefs—albeit they are corrupt beliefs—maintained sound ways of thinking, and struggled to keep their psyches powerful, they could gain the sympathy of anti-Islamic world powers. Thus, they found support to have a homeland in Palestine. They occupied Muslim territories and confiscated the wealth, houses, and state capital of these territories. Then they started to build a strong military power to defend their beliefs and construct a powerful economy to be able to exchange relations with the world community.

Shouldn't we, the Muslim world, make use of this practical experience of the Jews, whom Allah has banished from His

mercy? Shouldn't we go back to follow the way of our predecessors?

**19.** It has been verified that spiritual strength gained from firm belief and sound thought plays a major role in creating the material powers that defend those beliefs. Then comes the interaction between the spiritual and material factors to give the nation its supremacy and leading status among the world community. This is exactly what happened with our forefathers. They established a powerful civilization and subdued the world because they held firm beliefs and had strong confidence in them.

Later on, when the Muslim power declined and the Arab world, particularly Egypt, was dominated by European powers, both faith and people were badly affected. This ordeal had these results:

- Young people who were influenced by Western civilization came to believe that it is disgraceful to be ascribed to Islam and it is shameful to commit oneself to Islamic principles. This condition so spread in Muslim societies that a university professor reported that he could not start a lecture by praising Allah because his students would laugh at him.

- In Egypt, people became accustomed to seeing lewd tourists wander the streets with their bodies half-naked, searching for places to gamble or drink alcohol. In addition, some Muslims have unfortunately gone to imitate these wicked figures and prepare for them what they want. Telling about this state and what happens in bars, Al-Manfaluti, an Egyptian man of letters, said

> I knew one who was thought of as wise, pure, and honest who used to go to these places, where he was seen in the company of a prostitute moving him up and down as she desired, while in other places he seemed to be as proud as a Roman emperor or a Persian king.

- It has become usual that some call for neglecting Islamic teachings and morals. This happens on the pretext that we should imitate the European lifestyle to achieve their degree of development and share the glory of their civilization. We have swallowed all aspects of their life, whether good or bad, decent or shameful. Some expressions are used with new connotations, such as *taqlid* (imitation), *tajdid* (renewal), *jumud* (severity of thought), *taharrur* (liberation), *raj'iyah* (backwardness), *taqaddum* (development), *murunah* (flexibility), and *tazammut* (fundamentalism). Proponents of liberal trends turned to

violating religious and moral principles. In addition, they attacked religious values on the pretext of tolerance. They used to act upon the slogan, "Liberate your thought and follow it wherever it might go." Finally, they have transgressed all limits and claimed that whether Allah exists or not is not a fundamental issue to discuss.

- Then, all aspects of the European lifestyle were gradually introduced in Egypt. In 1896 Cairo witnessed the opening of the first cinema house, and in 1889 the usurious National Bank of Egypt was established and given the right to issue banknote papers.

- Bars and prostitution houses were introduced and extended to the countryside by a license from governmental offices, not only in Egypt but also in most Arab countries.

We can say that the imperial powers succeeded in inculcating the following ideas in the heads of most people:

- Everyone has personal freedom to say and act as he wills;

- Intellectuals and men of letters are free to write and say whatever they like without any pressure from the scholars. Society should follow European secularism;

- Women should be "liberated". Muslim women should not wear *hijab* because it prevents them from enjoying different aspects of modern life as do women in Europe.

Egypt (Cairo) became the headquarters of the British intelligence agency, which plotted conspiracies against Islam and Muslim powers, mainly the Ottoman sultans. Egyptians were obliged to participate in wars against their Muslim brothers in the Hijaz, Syria, Iraq, Dardanelles, and Libya. Meanwhile, Muslims were also obliged to pay charity to the Red Cross.

Following the declaration of martial law and the cutting of relations with Turkey, British commanders obliged Egyptian statesmen and scholars to advise their people in a public gathering on 6 November 1914 to keep quiet and yield to orders to avoid their attacks.[5]

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[5]Dr. Muhammad Muhammad Hussain, *Al-Itijahat Al-Wataniyah fi Al-Adab Al-Mu'asir*.

What do the advocates of reading nothing but the Qur'an and Sunnah want from this? These are events of our modern history. Faith and the power to defend it became weak due to the interaction of the vestiges of faith and their effects.

Truly, it is regrettable to find oneself obliged to clarify what is already clear and to prove what is logical and should not be argued by opponents. But Allah has destined that one of the major problems of our contemporary thinking and revival and the relationships between ourselves is to waste time clarifying what is already clear and proving what is already logical, and arguing over improvements.

If this thinking prevailed and were destined to rule, would we go back to the time when Muslims were really as Allah described them in the Holy Qur'an? ﴾*You are the best nation to have been raised up for mankind*﴿ (Al-Imran, 110). But no, this can never happen with their lame thinking. This can never happen with abstract thought without work, depending only on what they have concluded from the Qur'an and neglecting the signs of Allah in this vast universe.

Our need for modern civilization is similar to this civilization's need for our Islamic values, principles, and humanitarian attitudes. If the attention of all Muslims, the

masses as well as the governments, were directed towards the application of Islamic concepts in modern civilization, they could reach the limits of prosperity, and would certainly rule the world again and spread Islam over all other religions. They could make use of what others have achieved in different fields of knowledge to overcome any troubles in the way of making Islam the universal religion.

Lastly, Islam has granted full freedom for the human mind to work and has never subjected it to religious restrictions; Islam has maintained a wide vision of knowledge incorporating the universe and creatures; and Islam has held a global concept of legitimate politics. Why, then, should some Muslims adopt stern ways of thinking that may lead to the destruction of the Muslim nation before any other?

O Allah! To You Alone do we complain of their fallacies and only You do we call for help, for it is You Alone Whose help can be sought!

## (16)

## CALIPHATE

**1.** Ibn Majah narrated from Annas (4015): Someone asked, "O Messenger of Allah! When will we stop enjoining good and forbidding evil?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "If there appears in you some things of what appeared in people before you." And we continued, "O Messenger of Allah! And what were the things that appeared in people before us?" "Rule in your inferiors, abomination in your superiors, and knowledge in your base people." The base is the worst part in anything and has no good in it.

Abu Dawud narrated from Buraidah: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Learning includes ignorance and speech includes stammering."

And `Amr bin Shu`aib reported from his father, from his grandfather: Only three kinds of people will give a *fatwa*: an

*amir* (commander), his deputy, or an impostor.[1] An *amir* is an imam, the deputy is his substitute, and the impostor is an insinuator, a parasitic intruder who is uninvited but invites himself. He takes on responsibility without need or qualification. He is the same as a hypocrite. He assumes the risk of *fatwa* and undertakes its responsibility without being qualified with a degree granted by learned men who supervise his study and license him. By his *fatwa* he intends nothing but hypocrisy and feigns what he does not have, cloaked in repute and falsehood.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "A time will come when there will be few experts f *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and many orators."[2]

**2.** This thesis does not aim to write about the jurisprudence, theory, or history of the caliphate. Nor does it attempt to show the relationship between its secular and religious thought and the unity of the Islamic nation (*ummah*), nor to show the affects of its disappearance on the nation. None of

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[1]Ahmad and Ad-Darami

[2]From Imam Al-Harawi from Abi Darr. See *Sawt Al-Mantiq*, vol. 1, p. 74.

these is intended in this work. Nor is this thesis about the essence of the caliphate or its characteristics, for these are subjects for those of the greatest learning and expertise in jurisprudence, history, politics, and social law. The writer of these lines finds himself nequal o uch ask, or e as seen eminent men who have written doctoral dissertations on the caliphate and other distinguished scholars who have contributed to the same subject, and all have fallen short of their target. He sees that even the largest Islamic academic organizations—such as the research institute in Al-Azhar University, which brings together the academic elite—fall short.

This writer still remembers that the subject of the caliphate was part of the syllabus in Islamic history during his undergraduate study in the Faculty of Islamic Theology and still keeps his textbooks that were written by specialists, including several who later became rectors of Al-Azhar University. So, someone who knows his real worth should not attempt such a risky subject. This writer, fully aware of the weightiness of the subject and his own humble self, does not mean to touch upon anything pertinent to the caliphate.

What is meant by these lines is to display the intellectual deterioration of some Muslim immigrants and to what

abysses their arrogance and ignorance have led them. So now only one who struts, lisps, and stammers would dare hold a pen, and only one who scribbles and scratches would have the audacity to jot down a few lines in which he has confronted his theme and written a modern constitution in a book entitled *Caliphate*. This book claims to set a constitution for the Islamic nation from its east to its west when such a state rises at the hands of someone like him. May Allah have mercy on the poet who said

> She was so emaciated until her kidneys were harmed
> And her ribs could be counted until every bankrupt
> dared ask its price.

This is a statement of one of their problems that they suffer from in their new home and which dissipates them from serving Islam in a land which is thirsty for its truths and values.

This writing aims to help the confused one who imagines himself to be walking on the straight way, thinking his misdeeds are good, the deluded one who feels that he is one hundred percent right, yet he does not have the rudiments of knowledge and fancies himself to be above average, considering his proximity to his sheikh and his conferring with him on animosity to have qualified him.

**3.** While this man writes a constitution like modern ones, even if he only thinks he does, his imam comes and denies the codification of the *shari`ah* that was demanded by all the Muslim groups, saying that it is already codified in the books of jurisprudence.

How the man suffers from misunderstanding, not asking about the things he does not know and rashly refusing what he does not know! He pretends to be discerning, showing the false intelligence that the author of *Al-Isharat* warned us against when he concluded

> Beware of your cleverness and your denial of everything, opposing and rejecting all, for this is rashness and weakness. It is not foolishness to deny what does not become clear to you of distant fact; it is foolishness to believe in something whose evidence is not between your hands.

The mistakes stem from not understanding the nature of jurisprudence books and codification. Jurisprudence books are scholarly works that show the facts of each subject, mention its linguistic and semantic significance, identify its parts, then look at the issues in detail. Then they show their relation to other sciences and their legal judgments. Some of

their applications refer to an actual state of affairs or occurrence or something probable. Others go too far into the hypothetical, referring to things that did not or are unlikely to occur. This is the nature of the academic approach in many theoretical sciences. And this is different from the nature of the law system, which codifies its issues into basic and subsidiary laws that are details of the basic ones. The basic laws are the reference and the subsidiary laws should not include anything that contradicts the basic laws. This systemization or codification, particularly in basic laws, will likely determine principles, values, and directions. These are placed into numbered items and categorized by theme.

It is not within the nature of codification to examine the facts of a subject nor to examine its linguistic or semantic significance except as needed to eliminate misunderstanding.

Codification organizes conclusions from jurisprudence into general principles and detailed clauses that will facilitate reference for the researcher.

Codification is a mere formulation that has a general quality which does not assign anyone the task of legislating, judging, or executing law, as did the author of *Caliphate*.

Maybe the issue of codification will become clearer if we follow what a committee of Islamic jurisprudence experts did in the *Mausu`at Al-Fiqh* (*Encyclopedia of Jurisprudence*) in terms of chapters, sections, and items, each item gathering the relevant facts. For instance, under the item "*ibn*" (son) is mentioned everything relevant to family rules, inheritance, and other areas. This collection gathers the contributions of different schools of jurisprudence, eliminating for the researcher the troublesome task of delving into many books of jurisprudence and their references. So, O sheikh! Are the books of jurisprudence the same as codifying a constitution? There is also *Mawsu`at Taqnin Ash-Shari`ah* (*Encyclopedia of Codifying Shari`ah*) prepared by Al-Azhar in a number of large volumes. Thus, if the jurisprudence books were codified, why did your friend need to write his "constitution"? And if they were not codified, why are you denying this?

Maybe this will make it clear to us who should perform the codification process. Isn't he the *fiqh* scholar, the most knowledgeable of jurisprudence, its sources, references, directions, methods, and ways of deduction? And he is practiced in the ways of the law and in deducing it.

Thus we see that codification, whether in the basic or subsidiary law, has become in our time the thing most needed for making any effort, particularly social effort. It requires experts of various specializations in addition to scholars of Islamic jurisprudence.

From this we see the rashness of denying codification, and of one or two alone attempting to write a constitution for the whole Islamic nation. It is a strange thing to let unknown people write a constitution for the nation that is entitled to rule the whole world from east to west. It shows the depth of the problems of these immigrants in Brooklyn, New York.

**4.** A league of hatred and a bond of ignorance join them together. They are individuals from every corner of the globe, the majority from Egypt, who immigrated to America to earn their living. A bond was established between these odds and ends, fellowships and conferences which advocated hatred for their homeland and countrymen and called them to follow those who sow the seeds of discontent and imitate those who wear their garb even out of hypocrisy. Their arrogant ignorance is such that if one reads a booklet or hears a word from a scholar or a pseudo-scholar or a hater like them, or a *fatwa* from someone with minimal knowledge who grew a beard and thus became a scholar, it will be the

balance on which scholars are weighed. But as for an authority, a sheikh, or a reliable reference, they reserve the right to scold or modify what he said. It does not matter if the scholar is a rector of Al-Azhar University, Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, or Sheikh Ash-Sha`rawi, so much so that one of them would say, "He is seeking Allah's grace by hating Sheikh Muhammad Al-Ghazali!"

All those good people got this to their face and behind their backs.

**5.** The writer of the pages called *Caliphate*, Usamah At-Tubgi, is a poultry seller in Brooklyn, New York. What happens when a project like the Pan-Muslim caliphate is re-established at the hands of someone like him, and he holds the reins of Muslims all over the world? His half-brother on the father's side prepared the book with him.

I knew Usamah well:

- He fights the truth with delusions and debates the truth after it has become obvious, and we ask him, "If the truth is exposed for everyone to see, will you follow it?" He stammers and does not go straight. He writes what he claims is a criticism of whatever scholarly ideas he is ignorant.

- He reminds you of the sayings of our scholars before him. Abu Al-Aswad said, "If you want to torture a scholar, make some ignorant one stick to him." But he is in the company of people to whom length of beard gives more security than knowledge and reason. As a poet said:

  You are ignorant yet you don't know you are.
  How can I make you aware that you are not aware?

- I knew him unable to form one correct Arabic sentence and unable to utter one hadith without distorting its syntax.

- He reads what he does not understand.

- He understands something other than what he reads.

- He is pushed to do evil things and yields.

- He attends the mosque as hired to hurt scholarship and the truth.

- He is checked, but he does not change his mind.

- He denies what he does not know of knowledge.

- He improvises and organizes out of whim.

- In all the above-mentioned activities, he makes use of people like him who are united by the same whims and ugly subordination.

Similar things are attracted to each other
And the most similar thing to our life is food.

**6.** What I have said previously was not meant to be abusive or belittling, even though it appears so. But it is a necessary introduction from someone who has scrutinized this book—which is on a very serious topic—for its ideas and its relation to belief, the nation and its unity, its history and development, its contemporary material, its ideals and potential, and the aspirations of Muslims. Introducing the writer and researcher usually helps to identify the weightiness of a book, whether it is joking or serious, weak or strong. Writing represents the author's ideology and passions and is revealing of the author as he writes. For instance, if his expression is true to life, a poultry seller will tell of his occupation in the way he deals with chickens, the fine or foul odor, how thin or fat they are, even the way they are plucked. If he is a scholar he will be an authority on identifying *jalalah* (an animal that eats dung) and its legal judgment.

7. This is the reason for this introduction by someone who really knew him. Another reason is that the jacket blurb, which usually introduces the author and his book, was very strange. It mentioned his name and that of his brother who shared this shallow thought with him, his hometown, his grandfather's name, the six sons and nine daughters of his grandfather, and that was it!

My word of introduction is not meant to be derogatory or sarcastic, as the writer may be a distinguished poultry seller. He is not to blame on that score. He tried in his writing to restore our cherished hope, the caliphate of the Muslims. It could be counted among the unique points to his credit to restore part of our history.

There was once a stationery dealer who was well versed in Arabic literature, and Al-Khatib Al-Iskafi was a prominent figure in Arabic linguistics who worked as a cobbler. Yaqut said in his dictionary:

> Ibn Al-`Imad said: Three of the Asbahan inhabitants achieved high ranks of knowledge: a tailor, a cotton ginner, and a cobbler. The tailor was Abu `Ali Al-Marzuki, the cotton ginner was Abu Mansur, and the cobbler was Al-Khatib. The jurisprudence scholar Abu

> Hanifah was a cloth merchant. Among our men of genius were a painter, Abu Bakr Muhammad Ibn Al-Hasan; and skinners who made and sold water skins, `Ali Bakr the Elder and `Ali Bakr the Younger. Among the scholars of Qur'an and hadith was the locksmith Abu Bakr the Elder. Of course he was different from the locksmith Al-Mirwazi the Younger.

The fault with our friend, who is no friend at all, is not his occupation but his ignorance of himself. That sort of ignorance is likely to lead to perdition, as Allah saves him who knows his own worth.

The fault is also his misrepresentation of the Islamic view. It is a survey that is not justified by true hopes, the best of intentions, or noble purposes. All these are unjustifiable reasons for giving such a bad example and an ill-conceived thought, a closed mind and dim eye that fail to discern the real facts and requirements of the times and fall short of identifying the ability of Islamic jurisprudence—and caliphate jurisprudence is part of it—to confront the ages. His sight strays from confronting the times. His vision and thought are confined to the historical past, which is absolutely unnecessary according to *shari`ah* and reason.

**8.** The distinguishing feature of man is thought. This is what makes him different from other beings. And the type of thinking distinguishes one person from another, one nation from another, even one age from another. Language is the mold of thought. It was even said, "Language is thought" in the same way that it was said, "A word and its referent are the same." Therefore, Socrates said to his companion who had kept silent for long, "Talk so that I can see you."

By "thinking" I do not mean the absolute mental process, as this is something natural that all human beings share. This is the natural characteristic that makes man different from any other creature. I mean scientific and logical thinking that entails, among other things, depth, comprehensiveness, generality, and objectivity. It is abstracted from the thinking self and has a strong vision that penetrates to the invisible and is not deluded by the surface. Then one who thinks in this way knows how to put his thoughts into practice.

How they pressed their sheikh, "You have exhausted us by exhorting us to perform jihad. Tell us now, how do we set about it?" His answer was, "I don't know! It is for me to speak and for you to perform jihad!"

The student speaks to us about the caliphate and does not tell us how to establish a single caliphate that would realize the unity of the nation and the Muslims on the international level, bearing in mind the presence of all the political, regional, economic, scientific, cultural, and colonial obstacles. And if you ask him how, his answer would be no different from his teacher's: "I don't know!"

And as scientific thinking knows how to apply a theory, it is also based on generalities so that the rules and conclusions one ends with should not explain exclusively a specific issue but should be broadly applicable and cover similar specific issues. If this generality does not cover cases that are similar in characteristics and conditions, it is an unscientific generality.

**9.** If we go on applying these peculiarities of logic, which would find no place with learned men of thought and researchers, the validity of what I said in describing the writer of *Caliphate* will be revealed, as well as the book's inferiority as a science or method that helps Muslims in these difficult days. The most that can be said about the achievement of this fellow who did not know his own worth is that it is the wishful thinking of a dreamer.

He dedicated it to those who took up arms and were executed, sent to Paradise as martyrs. Yet Muslim scholars say that one cannot ascertain that any individual is sent to Paradise or Hellfire. At-Tirmidhi reported from Annas: One of the Companions of the Prophet died and a man said, Congratulations [to him]. He's going to Paradise." The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "How do you know? Maybe he talked about things that were not his business, or maybe he was too mean to give in charity something he had in abundance." Another hadith says that there was a boy who died a martyr on the Day of Uhud. A rock was found tied to his belly to ease the pangs of hunger. His mother wiped the dust from his face and said, "Have fun, my son! Enjoy yourself in Paradise!" And the Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "How do you know? Maybe he talked about things that did not concern him and forbade people to have things which did not harm him." How can a person who claims to be a Muslim have a definite opinion about the final fate of a person when the Prophet himself (peace be upon him) refused to say the final word?

He also dedicates his book to the "earthquake sheikh whose strongest shocks have not come yet!" This admiration is strictly off the subject of the caliphate, for a man being an

earthquake does not necessarily make him—or anybody else who keeps his company, for that matter—fit for this serious post. Not everyone who is an earthquake is worth knowing. Evildoers, including highwaymen and tyrants, can also be earthquakes. The tremor of the earthquake sheikh that has not come yet is by far the strongest and most devastating phenomenon man has ever seen so far. But it is probably only imaginary and impossible to occur.

Logically speaking, he is inferring the agent from the effect, glorifying the sheikh in terms of his effect. The stronger reasoning is to infer the effect from the agent, not the other way around such as inferring the existence of the world from the existence of Allah, or of miracles from prophecy, or of fire from heat. This stronger argument shows that the reasoner has understood the reality of the agent and, therefore, needs no more proof of his existence. Did you note how Abu Bakr believed the Prophet on the question of his message? He did not ask him for a proof of his credibility, but rather his personal knowledge of Muhammad showed him his authenticity. Then it is not the result of greatness that the effects of the earthquake sheikh include a major tremor in the waiting. Rather, the sheikh must have within himself

the proof that he is credible and praiseworthy, that his self, not his effect, is estimable and deserves to be followed.

**10.** Here is another important proof: to admire the earthquake sheikh is to admire a system of destruction and devastation, which is not one of the methods of knowledge or logical thinking. Rather it is rushing to conclusions. And as destruction is not part of a learned method, neither is hastening to lay the foundations and enjoy the results. If such an Islamic nation were established by this method, it would not be supported by a nation torn into shreds that has long become obsolete. In addition, it is not the method that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) used in establishing the state and building the nation.

Truly this talk about the earthquake, execution, and flogging while he is out of power is frightening. How will he act when he is in power? He thus gives the proof to those who fear and say, "If we were governed by Islamists, blood would be shed in streams."

This talk about brutality is a reaction to the pitiful position held by the opponents of the application of *shari`ah*. But a learned position is never just a reaction. The call for a real Islamic government cannot come about except through a

genuine, strong faith, and not through the reaction of a hater. In fact, a deluge of talk by believers of the Islamic concept and their attitude feed the spirit of fear in their opponents and those who have insufficient knowledge of Islam. Thus those propagators of Islam would shut off people from what they are calling for, and this is an ignorant contradiction. About this the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Some among you are repulsive."

**11.** It appears to us that among the mistakes of his reasoning —besides its being reactionary—is that it is not objective; yet the characteristic of scholarly, scientific thinking is that it is objective, not reactionary. Scholarly thinking is also not just a repetition of others' ideas in the theoretical studies of the jurisprudence of the caliphate. The problem of the caliphate today is not in recognizing or identifying it according to jurisprudence but in applying it practically. The obstacles in the way were mentioned before. The project of the constitution of the caliphate must include modern ideas that address current situations, as the problems today are different.

This book has not provided us with an Islamic vision nor with his vision for contemporary issues, some of which are dear to the whole world (if only ostensibly) as well as to

Muslims. In addition, Muslims have their own issues that have no hope without the caliphate. These are human rights; freedom; universal fraternity; women; Palestine; scientific and economic backwardness; ignorance; disease; class distinctions; absence of legal, political and social justice; mutual consultation (*'ashura*); tribal and ethnic prejudice; and problems of education, culture, and arts.

They will assure you, "Islam is the guarantor that ensures the solutions of all these." And truly it is. However, it is applied by human hands. Muslims, with contemporary logic, are obliged to declare the broad lines of these problems. When the Prophet immigrated to Madinah, didn't he write such a political instrument for the rising nation? He did not just say, "Islam is the solution," even though he was the standard bearer of Islam and the most understanding of it.

The fact is that our friend glanced at a few old reference books, borrowed a few paragraphs from them, then came to his primitive vision for sound welfare, which starts, according to him, with the alley, then moves to the street and village. But these values have now been turned into social institutions by civilized nations. Can our proposed solutions be inferior to what humanity has reached? So then let the weepers cry and the gloaters laugh. We are in an age when

economic doctrines are struggling for supremacy, and the ramifications of economic problems are dense and complex. What is needed is deep, specialized, and thorough study with the broadest understanding.

These complexities will not be solved by such naive visions about the economy of today and the financial establishments behind them that control the world. Would it suffice in this respect that every family should choose its supporter, then its alley, its street, and its village?

**12.** Another aspect of unscholarly thinking in our friend's book is that he dedicates it to such-and-such a person and dedicates personal messages to so-and-so and such-and-such group, thereby eliminating anybody who imagines himself connected to him, leaving only those named.

Among the aspects of this individuality is his publication of Sheikh `Umar `Abdur-Rahman's picture every few pages. What do these pictures have to do with the project of a constitution for the Muslim nation that may come into being only after generations?

Another personal feature is his reply to those he mentioned by name, that they said in their trial that they cannot see

Sheikh `Umar as an *amir* (ruler) of the masses. He replied that the Prophet appointed Ibn Maktum as his successor in Madinah. But it is known from the biography of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that it was to lead the people in the Prayer. It was a special leadership, not the general leadership whose conditions were set by Muslim scholars of old such as the leader being from the Quraish and having sound vision. It is a mistake in his logic, as his proof does not match the meaning.

The nature of a legal text is that the wording is abstract and general. But the genius of this book specifies the names of cabinet ministers and grants every one of them a title such as "your reverence." How does this consultative council for which he has fixed certain functions, all of which are obsolete, agree with the past one whose members never bore such titles?

What he wrote is good enough for someone leading a band of nomads in the desert on some non-existent island. It is a pity that this friend of ours has actually written this so-called constitution in response to the accusations of what he calls "disbelievers, hypocrites, and libertines" who charge that the Islamists do not have a system. When a man receives a challenge, he gives his best to answer it and silence the

challengers, and he will review his answer with those who are particularly close to him in belief and ideology. If he does so, woe to the Muslims that their project could be so futile!

**13.** Then comes the great disaster in his declaration about the trials that would be held if their calls succeeded and their state were established. The trial would not last for more than three hours, after which the accused would be sentenced to death for being an apostate!

According to what book or Sunnah did he determine the length of a trial? And how does this weigh in the balance of Islamic justice? Is an apostate to be executed as a punishment for a crime or as a disbeliever? Where is the offer of repentance to the apostate? And who ruled that so-and-so is an apostate? And where is his right to defense? And how can a sentence be passed without a trial?

Glory be to Allah Who will ask the unbelievers on Judgment Day for their excuses and listen to their defense, even though He knows them best. Based on this divine action, scholars decided that a judge should not rule according to his knowledge [but according to evidence]. During his caliphate `Umar bin Al-Khattab asked `Abdur-Rahman bin `Auf,

"What if the *amir* sees someone committing abominations and punishes him?" `Abdur-Rahman answered him, "He has to have evidence or he will be punished for slander."

And [the former] Sheikh Al-Azhar—and he mentions him by name—and such-and-such minister and such-and-such mufti are to be flogged; and Sheikh Al-Azhar is to be flogged for slander and his testimony is not to be accepted. The limits of slander are known in *shari`ah*, and I do not understand how he could punish someone for something he did not do!

Isn't this a chance for those who hate to apply Islam to chortle to people, "Isn't this how we said the Islamists would behave if they had a state of their own?"

Allah knows I am not concerned with defending anyone but, rather, with showing zeal for Islam itself and apprehension for such dark, empty, and tyrannical thinking, including his saying enthusiastically, "So-and-so had better have his hands and feet cut off and be left crucified for one night, and if he is found alive, strike him with a sword. And so-and-so should be beheaded, and so-and-so hanged."

O woe for such law executed by such a one! May Allah protect us from empty thinking, unjust judgment, narrated

thought, ignorance of the state of affairs, and the policy of keeping to what happened in the past as if the incidents of the past are repeating themselves. What good do you expect from a nation that has those people for leaders and supporters? And may Imam Al-Juwaini prosper, as he said in his book *Ghiath Al-Ummam*, "The affairs of leadership cannot be carried out on the basis of definite one-way resolutions, and they cannot be perceived as sure." This means that our predecessors' methods are discretionary, not compulsory, so if we develop something more befitting for our times, this is the correct, obligatory *ijtihad* (endeavor, independent judgment).

**14.** Ever since I was a schoolboy I had a pressing question: Do the basic Islamic sources have an answer for every new question? My feelings said yes, and this was supported by what Allah the Most High says:

❨*We have neglected nothing in the Book*❩

(Al-An`am, 38)

Then I was confronted by the scholars saying, "If you find neither in the Book nor in the Sunnah an apt explanation..." This is an actual wording of a hadith. What about new incidents? The scholars said that incidents are infinite and

texts are finite. How, then, can the finite judge the infinite? The scholars started giving their answers.

I read in books of Islamically legal politics written by great scholars such as Ibn Taimiyah and Al-Mawardi and others, but I did not get an answer from them.

There were questions on my mind about whether there was any harm in setting new rules for new incidents based on the whole of the texts and the objectives of *shari`ah.*

I did not dare speak freely of such conjectures. There were cries of "It did not appear in any text," so I kept silent, but I was pulled by a strong emotion towards the Qur'an and the guidance of the Prophet and the fear of voices that were rejecting everything that was not mentioned in the Book and Sunnah and accusing it of being *bida`h* (innovation).

I used to wonder: Is everything that was not included during the period of legislation a prohibited innovation? Isn't this a refusal of the development approved by the Qur'an, which is among the signs of Allah? Isn't this asking for the impossible? Isn't this part of the stagnation that afflicted Muslim ideology with the conjecture that there is no knowledge beyond the Qur'an and Sunnah, no learning, until

Muslims were taken by surprise at the hands of their enemies who colonized their lands with new science methods?

To understand the universality of the Book and the Sunnah in this sense is a misunderstanding based on a good intention. The fruit of this anxiety and confusion while searching for the truth of *shari`ah* was that Allah guided me to add just one phrase to the sentence, "Everything that was not included in the *shari`ah* is refused." It became, "Everything that was not included in the *shari`ah* is refused if it opposes *shari`ah*."

This addition was an overwhelming breakthrough. Allah had kindly opened to me the door of understanding the nature of Islamic *shari`ah* and its stand on innovation and politics. But despite all the psychological composure this gave me—and there were numerous times in practical life—whenever I met such conditions, I felt apprehensive until Allah helped me with the support of some scholars approving what I had reached. This is what Allah brought to light to me on this most important issue. I come to what Imam Ibn Al-Qayim quoted from Al-Imam Al-Hanbali bin `Aqil in his two books, *At-Turuq Al-Hukmiah* and *Bid'i` Al-Fawa'id*. Ibn Al-Qayim said in them in mentioning some scholarly debates:

> Ibn `Aqil said: Running things in a politically legitimate (*shari`i*) way is through judiciousness (or firmness). No imam can do without it.
>
> A Shafi`i jurist said: There is no politics (or governing) except what agrees with *shari`ah*.
>
> Ibn `Aqil said: Politics (or governing) is what makes people closer to virtue and farther from corruption, even if it was not so set by the Prophet or through revelation. If by saying "except only that which agrees with *shari`ah*" you mean anything that is not contradictory to the *shari`ah*, then this is correct. If you mean only what was pronounced by the Law-Maker, then you are putting the Companions in the wrong. What the Rightly Guided Caliphs did was not rejected by scholars of Sunnah.

Ibn Al-Qayim said:

> This is a slippery position and it is a position of difficulty and a battleground in which one group neglected and suspended the prescribed punishments and threw away rights and encouraged lewd people to indulge themselves in corruption. Thus they rendered

*shari`ah* helpless, incapable of fulfilling the interests of Allah's servants.

They blocked many paths for themselves that would have helped them to know right from wrong. They abandoned them even though they definitely knew that these were right guides, thinking that these paths were against the basis of *shari`ah*. What made them do this was their lack of knowledge of *shari`ah*. When the rulers saw that and found that the people's condition would not improve except with something additional, they introduced political laws with which to regulate the affairs of the world. As a consequence of their limited knowledge, these rulers and whatever they introduced in political conditions led to long evil, wide corruption, and the deterioration of the situation so that it is difficult to retrieve it and put it in order.

Another group went beyond all limits. They legitimized whatever was contrary to the prohibitions of Allah and His Prophet.

Both groups rose from their deficiency in knowing what Allah sent to His messengers. Allah sent His messengers and revealed His Books so that people

may act on justice, on which the heavens and earth were established. If the signs of justice appear in any way, this is the *shari`ah* of Allah and His religion. Allah the Exalted has not limited the paths of justice. But He showed that by whatever way He legitimized, He means to establish justice and fairness among people. So however I produce justice is of the religion.

He said:

Don't say that just politics (or governing) is incompatible with whatever the *shari`ah* pronounced, but whatever is agreeable with *shari`ah* is part of it and we call it "politics" (or "governing") according to your terminology. But it is a true *shari`ah*. The Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him) imprisoned someone on a charge of slander and punished (another) on a charge when the signs of suspicion showed on the accused. If one sets free someone who is known for notoriety such as house-breaking and repeated theft and declares, "I will not hold anyone to account unless there are two just witnesses available," he will be acting contrary to the policies of *shari`ah*.

Similar to this, the Rightly Guided Caliphs adopted policies which the *shari`ah* did not follow and with which they ruled the nations, acting on the basis of an interpretation of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Ibn Al-Qayim said:

> And for people to divide ruling into *shari`ah* and politics is groundless. There are two types of politics: just politics, which is an inseparable part of *shari`ah* and not its parity; and unjust politics, which is against *shari`ah* as much as injustice is against justice.

How similar today and yesterday are! Those whose minds were too narrow to understand *shari`ah* refused what was good for the people on the pretext that it was not mentioned before. They had the statesmen invent what was good for the people while thinking that it was not a part of *shari`ah*. So, those with a narrow understanding bore the guilt of their misunderstanding and the guilt of thinking they were apart from *shari`ah*, and today the caliphate is being rewritten in such a way that it will be useless, on the assumption that the predecessors (*salaf*) left nothing unsaid. They assumed that *shari`ah* is only what was said, leaving out its objectives.

If we limit the *shari`ah* and caliphate jurisprudence to what our predecessors did, we would show that the *shari`ah* is unable to face the times. Here is a principle that has already been mentioned: whatever is new is not necessarily opposed to *shari`ah*, rather it is a part of it although it is unnamed.

Imam Ibn Al-Qayim said:

> This division differentiates between the inheritors of the prophets and others. It is originally based on one point: the universality of his message (peace be upon him) concerning everything needed by the servants of Allah in their knowledge, sciences, and actions, on which depends their benefit in this world and in the Hereafter. If one does not have this well established in his heart, his faith in the Prophet is not yet mature.

The issue then is quite serious, as it deals with the ability of the *shari`ah* to face new events and with the essence of faith.

If one limits his understanding of *shari`ah* and its policy to the revelation, he falls short of understanding it and bears the guilt of those rulers who do not follow the *shari`ah*. Such a one needs to review his faith concerning two essential matters: the suitability of *shari`ah* for all times and the

universality of the message of Muhammad (peace be upon him). This universality involves two concepts: the universality as far as every adult person is concerned and the universality of his message to deal with every new incident.

**15.** To illustrate completely the abyss of ignorance, vanity, and foolishness that appears in this book, *Caliphate*, let us conclude by summarizing two models for an Islamic constitution. The first was set by the Islamic Research Institute at Al-Azhar as the recommendation of the Eighth Congress of the Islamic Research Institute held in Cairo in Dhul Qi`dah 1397 A.H., October 1977. These are extracts from it.

**Section One: The Nation**

1. Muslims are one nation.

2. States may be numerous within the Islamic nation.

3. The state may unite with one or more Islamic states.

4. The people will monitor the Imam and his assistants.

**Section Two: The Bases of the Islamic Community**

5. Cooperation and solidarity are the basis of the community.

6. The state is to order people to do good and to refrain from evil within the limits of their ability.

7. The family is the basis of the community. It is founded on religion and morality, and the state supports the family, maternity, and childhood.

8. The state is committed to protect the family, encourage marriage, and make it accessible.

9. The state is committed to the safety of the nation and the health of its individuals.

10. To seek knowledge is obligatory.

11. Religious education is a basic course in all stages of learning.

12. The state is committed to teaching Muslims everything of which there is a unanimous opinion regarding obligations and the biography of the Prophet.

13. The state is committed to teaching whatever is possible of the Qur'an in every year of schooling.

14. Displaying feminine beauty is prohibited...and the state issues laws...to protect people's sense of decorum.

15. Arabic is the official language and the Hijri calendar should be mentioned.

16. Public guardianship is for people's welfare and is particularly imposed for the protection of religion, mental health, people's lives, money, and honor.

17. The ends must be lawful and the means must be compatible with the rules of *shari`ah.*

**Section Three: The Islamic Economy**

18. The economy is based upon Islamic legal principles.

19. Freedoms of trade, industry, and agriculture are guaranteed within the limits of Islamic law.

20. The state makes development plans in keeping with Islamic law.

21. The state opposes monopoly and does not interfere with prices except when it is necessary.

22. The state encourages the reclamation of the desert.

23. *Ribaa* (interest) is not allowed.

24. The state owns whatever mineral wealth is in the earth.

25. Whatever money is left with no one to claim it belongs to the treasury.

26. The state pays *zakah* in its proper channels.

27. Charitable endowments are allowed.

**Section Four: Rights and Liberties**

28. Justice and equality are the foundations of government. The rights of defense and to press charges are guaranteed.

29. Freedoms of belief, thought, labor, expression of viewpoint, and to form associations are natural rights.

30. Residences, correspondences, and private matters are inviolable.

31. The right to move from one place to another is common to all.

32. It is prohibited to return political asylum seekers.

33. Torture is a crime, and neither the crime nor the punishment is canceled as long as the perpetrator is alive.

34. An employee in whose jurisdiction a crime of torture takes place and who fails to report it will be punished.

35. No shedding of blood is left unpunished in Islam.

36. Every person has the right to submit a complaint.

37. The rights to work, earn, and own are guaranteed.

38. A woman can work within the limits of *shari`ah.*

39. The state guarantees the freedom of ownership and the rights of possession and security.

40. Expropriation of a person's property is not allowed except for public welfare.

41. Establishment of a newspaper is permitted and freedom of the press is guaranteed within the limits of the rules of *shari'ah*.

42. Citizens have the right to form societies and syndicates.

43. Rights are exercised in accordance with the aims of *shari'ah*.

**Section Five: The Imam**

44. The state has an imam who must be obeyed, even if there is a difference of opinion.

45. No creature is to be obeyed in disobeying the Creator, nor is the imam to be obeyed in something strictly opposed to *shari'ah*.

46. The law shows the way to have a general pledge of allegiance and it is to be done by an absolute majority.

47. To be eligible for the head of state, one must be Muslim, male, mature, sane, pious, and knowledgeable of the rules of *shari'ah*.

48. The imam is appointed with a general pledge from all the classes of the nation.

49. There is no wrong if one expresses an opinion against the pledge for the imam before it is concluded.

50. Those who have the right to make a pledge to the imam can discharge him whenever a reasonable cause ensues.

51. The imam is subject to the law.

52. The head of state enjoys all the rights that the citizens enjoy.

53. A will should not be written in favor of the imam, nor should he or his relatives be endowed.

54. Gifts to the imam are not allowed.

55. The imam is an example to be followed in justice, charity, and pious deeds.

56. The imam is responsible for leading his army in jihad and for protecting the ports.

57. The imam is responsible for enabling individuals and groups to enjoin good, forbid evil, and perform the obligations.

58. The imam appoints state employees.

59. Pardon for crimes other than those that have prescribed punishments cannot take place except by law.

60. The imam may, if necessary, take exceptional measures indicated by the law.

**Section Six: Administration of Justice**

61. Judgment is according to Islamic law.

62. All people are equal before the Islamic law. No person or group is distinguished with special courts.

63. No special courts are to be established and no litigant is to be deprived of his natural rights.

64. Judges are not to be prevented from listening to a case brought against the imam or rulers.

65. Sentences are passed and executed in the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate. The judge is not under the control of anything except Islamic *shari`ah*.

66. It is the responsibility of the state to carry out sentences.

67. The state ensures the independence of the courts.

68. The state selects the most eligible men for judges.

69. For crimes that have prescribed punishments, the accused must be present at the trial.

70. A court is to be held openly and the public may attend.

71. Crimes that have prescribed punishments include adultery, slander, theft, terrorism, use of intoxicants, and apostasy.

72. Punishments are determined by law.

73. The law clarifies the rules of inheritance.

74. The law sets the conditions for accepting repentance.

75. No execution for a crime is allowed except when reconciliation or the pardon of the one entitled to receive blood money is impossible.

76. In a matter of blood money, reconciliation is possible for more than blood money.

77. A woman may be equal to a man as far as blood money is concerned.

78. The condition for retaliation for injuries is that they be absolutely alike.

79. Flogging is the basic penalty, and imprisonment is not possible except for particular crimes.

80. A prisoner may not be humiliated or forced to be quiet or have his dignity offended.

81. A high constitutional court is established to judge how compatible the law is with Islamic *shari`ah.*

82. A special bureau of complaints may be established.

**Section Seven: The Parliament**

83.The parliament (representative council) makes the laws.

84.The law determines electoral districts.

85.The law determines conditions for membership

86.Government employees may nominate themselves.

87.A parliament member swears the following oath...

(Here is a full account of the parliament, its members, tasks, and the relationship between it and the imam on the one hand and between it and the government on the other. They are all controlled by Islamic *shari`ah.*)

**Section Eight: The Government**

129. The government is the highest executive and administrative state organization.

The rest of the articles deal with every member meeting his pledge to upkeep the *shari`ah.*

**Chapter 9: General and Transitional Rules**

A number of general and transitional items were mentioned until this constitution is put into operation.

The second constitutional model was approved by the International Islamic Council at Islamabad on 6 Rabi` Al-Awal 1401 A.H. (10 December 1983), which I have omitted because of its length. It is available from the International Islamic Center, the International Institute for Islamic Thought (Herndon, Virginia, USA), and Dar Al-Wafa' Printing and Publishing Establishment (Mansourah, Egypt). In addition to these two models there is *Ru'yah Islamiah Mu`asirah—I`lan Mabadi'* (*A Contemporary Islamic Vision: A Declaration of Principles*) (printed by Dar Ash-Shuruq, Cairo) prepared by ten major specialists in the field of *da`wah* work, for which Dr. Ahmad Kamal Abu Al-Magid wrote the introduction. There are other models, including one set by the late Dr. Mustafa Kamal Wasfi, vice president of the State Council and Islamic Research Institute member who participated in setting the model of Al-Azhar Research Institute. There is also Dr. `Ali Grishah's model, which is included in the collection of models printed by Dar Al-Wafa'.

If we consider the models of these constitutions, we conclude that there is a background of deep study behind them. They are comprehensive of Islamic jurisprudence in general and its politics in particular. They were set by knowledgeable and specialized experts who wrote in their own particular line of work and who were well versed in the method of setting modern constitutions.

And through their perception of the needs of the time, they managed to

- Produce the caliphate *shari`ah* in a modern way.

- Quiet the Islamist challengers by providing a course.

- Unconsciously point out the ignorance of those who attempt more than they are qualified for.

- Compare their work with that of the unqualified project advocates, thus making things clear.

> ❬*So We expound Our Revelations, that the way of the sinners may be made exposed.*❭
>
> (Al-An`am, 55)

**16.** How I wish our fellow Muslims who love Islam just as dearly as we do would listen to us to show their love for

Islam, their servitude for Allah in the shadow of this creed and His *shari`ah*, and their genuine desire for Muslims to return to Islam. They should ponder these words and not misinterpret them as attacking or belittling. They are only meant to draw attention to our points of weakness, which lead to the loss of our common purpose. Good intentions are not enough and will not make us meet our target unless we adopt good means. I wish that their rule were not what I heard from them directly, that he who does not share their viewpoint is their enemy, as they apply this hard and fast rule to their concept of Islam and even deal with brother Muslims by it. How they lost even those who were close to them and alienated further those who were already far away as an outcome of their dealing with people in this repulsive manner!

When I read this so-called constitution, I laughed sorrowfully with a laughter more like tears, the laughter of one who is broken-hearted with sorrow for his nation. Absurd pictures of childish games occurred to me!

Muslims, no doubt, need Islam to wake them up, keep them awake, and then to direct them. But at the same time they need a true picture of the problems and to identify a practical course for putting these values and laws of Islam into effect.

The mode of implementation is one thing, and what is implemented is another. Therefore the mode may differ, or rather, must certainly differ from one age to another. Thus the historical mode of implementation, for all its authenticity, is not obligatory, just as the wrong mode in the age of the "defective caliphate" does not put the blame on Islam.

The solutions of the predecessors (*salaf*) were based on the ability of the Islamic world at that time to be independent. The picture of the Islamic world today is unlike this picture of independence in terms of the Islamic world's helplessness and alienation, in terms of the intertwining and connections that the whole world is suffering from. So closely inseparable, so intricate and well integrated is the world that it will be difficult or even impossible for one nation or state to realize its independence in the same way it was practicable in the past.

It is not correct from the viewpoint of Islamic jurisprudence to depict it as incapable of assuming the proper form for modern times. This maligns Islam, even if indirectly, by making it seem unfitting for all times.

The true scholars are those who determine Islamic values, laws, and objectives and their part in preserving people's interests, know the past mode of implementation and how suitable it was for that time, then come to know current demands and obstacles, and so set an appropriate mode for applying Islamic principles. They are not scholars who copy indiscriminately from their predecessors. These scholars are not weeds that sprout overnight nor are they the outcome of mere personal reading. Nor are they repetitions of others' sayings nor echoes from the depths of the unknown. These scholars are the outcome of learning that was based on a long education structured by people of good knowledge whom Allah made as references for those who cared to seek knowledge. Allah bless our professors who passed on to us the saying of their learned sheikhs: "Do not take the interpretation of the Qur'an from my book, nor knowledge from my papers."

Thus Muslims' sorrow and fear intensify when they think of their future. I pity Islam's future if it is subjected to a leader who sheds blood unjustly. He would order people to be flogged without a trial, cut himself away from those who disagree with him without determining the causes, have people crucified on a whim, declare people unbelievers,

bribers, libertines for a mere difference of opinion. Is there anything more humiliating for Muslims than to have a mere poultry seller permit himself to commit such acts and even more terrible ones? If I had not known him, I would have said, "Maybe he is an unparalleled genius who went beyond all expectation." But as a matter of fact, I knew him personally and I was not any the wiser. But nobody blames me for my censure, and no one criticizes my offensive words. To put dew in the place of a sword in a high place is harmful, as is putting a sword in the place of the dew.

Governing and governments are part of Islamic *shari`ah*. Yet, the particular form of government to be used is not binding. It is human endeavor to make the aims of *shari`ah* come true: to control the movement of life with truth, justice, and kindness. Every system that in its time is the closest to realizing these aims is an Islamic system and a religious obligation. Thus two principles are established:

First, a previous form of government cannot necessarily be obligatory in all ages.

Second, it is not an Islamic obligation to establish a government that rejects any contemporary form and considers it un-Islamic.

**17.** The issue to me is not that of an unspecialized person writing a constitution, nor the naiveté of what he wrote, nor to be fooled by it and make it a course of action to be followed by all Muslims. Nor is the issue one of the errors it contains, linguistic and otherwise, so that some pages contain as many as seven mistakes. No, nothing of the sort. The essence of the sin is in failing to comprehend Islam and its special point that makes it different from all other religions. This defect and shortcoming is what blemishes the jurisprudence for *da`wah* and its system. Islam is a religion for all responsible people, addressing all people at large. It is a universal religion. And this universality has three aspects that must be fulfilled so that Islam's special character may be complete. And to diminish any single aspect will affect the understanding and perception of Islamic jurisprudence and jeopardize Islamic *da`wah* in the end.

The first aspect of the universality of Islam is that every adult is addressed by Muhammad's message (peace be upon him) and no one is to reject it. All adults in every time and place are addressed by his message and are called upon to adopt this religion. This aspect can hardly be ignored.

The second aspect of this universality concerns its commands. Everything people need in their information and

culture, their tasks and interests, their details of science and welfare, everything on which their thriving in this world and the Hereafter depends is there. Everything that faces them in these conditions of theirs has its rule in Islam. It is either stated specifically or in a general sense, by a law in a specific or general text, or by *ijtihad* that fixes a particular text and intent as a reference. Nothing turns up in people's lives that does not have a sensible reason in *shari'ah* that necessitates, allows, or prohibits its practice, whether it is obligatory, forbidden, Sunnah, disliked, or permissible.

From this point of view, Islam is an established system that controls people's actions so that they do not get out of hand because of ignorance, desire, or whim.

The third aspect of its universality is concerned with the civilization by which man becomes elevated as such until he reaches stages of extensive development, complete in perception and emotion, thought and reasoning, action and speech, conduct and behavior.

Islam, with respect to the first aspect, is commanding; with respect to the second, it is organizational and regulative; and with respect to the third, it is improving.

Islam, seen as a religion, has a creed and rituals, and it must be upheld by the believers.

And Islam can be seen as relations: man's relation with himself and with the others of his kind, and his relation with things and the universe. Islam has its values concerning these relations, and on these values Islamic morality is based. Grounded upon its moral foundation, it has laws that control these relations, not leaving them to moral submission.

Then Islam, after this legal and moral establishment, has its cultural values which complete for man his sense of perfection and realize a complete unity for mankind, an international cultural system that can accommodate human beings with all their different origins, languages, colors, and religions.

Those who do not accept Islam as a mere religion will definitely accept it as a value system and a law to establish the different human relations on the principles of justice, truth, benevolence, mercy, solidarity, and acquaintance. They will also accept it as a sort of civilization to elevate man both inwardly and outwardly in his choice of clothing, housing, vehicle, food, drink, words to speak or leave unsaid,

looks from his eyes and whether to lower or hold his gaze, and gifts that he should or should not give.

From the cultural point of view, Islam is a system that was formed by many nations of different ethnic groups and creeds.

Understanding Islam in this way eliminates all the doubts that it is fixed rather than changeable, and finite rather than infinite. Those who cast these doubts say that the Islamic moral values are fixed and stagnant; whereas life is changeable, so it needs new laws rather than fixed moral codes.

Had those people understood Islam in the right way, they would not have said that because the stability of the value system does not contradict the rule of changeability. Every new idea should be observed and judged by values; otherwise such ideas may involve injustice and aggression. Suppose, for instance, that there was an idea that was not based on justice. Would it be a good one? Therefore, the Islamic values are obligatory.

Laws and values are like scales, and no one should deny the importance of scales and balances in all the aspects of life.

The above statements reveal that, in Islam, every new matter should have a clear judgment, especially from the point of view of the objectives of Islam (such as justice, truth, and goodness). Anything that may realize such objectives should be considered to be from Islam and will be approved by *shari`ah*, even if it was not specified by it.

Those who are in doubt use "the finite" to mean the *shari`ah* texts and "the infinite" to mean everyday life and anything new that may happen to people in their life. But as we know, scholars always have answers to any questions they may be asked by means of the well-known methods stated in the texts, either by direct interpretation of the texts concerning these matters, or by interpreting these matters in the light of the objectives of Islam.

By this statement the doubts and misconceptions raised are eliminated, and the laziness of those who call people to Allah appears. In their analysis of Islam, they focus only on one aspect, either the worshiping or the organizational, and neglect, either intentionally or unintentionally, the cultural aspect, although it is the most important in presenting Islam to the people of the world.

Such negligence has resulted in:

- their confining their *da`wah* to the Muslims only;
- their considering every non-Muslim to be an enemy;
- their writings revealing a great deal of ignorance and negligence;
- their always being unfair to other people in the past and present;
- their not keeping to righteousness and thinking themselves to be in the right.

I believe that the above research concerning the universality and the humanitarianism of Islam is enough to clarify the cultural aspect of Islam. Such aspect is the one all the people on earth yearn for, but many of the callers to Islam are unaware of the fact that this aspect is latent in Islam and the Muslims.

I wish they would learn.

ISSUES OF ISLAM IN THE WEST

ISSUES OF ISLAM IN AMERICA